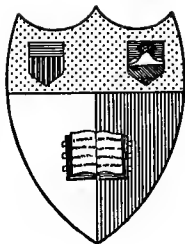


PRACTICAL PROBLEMS  
OF THE SCHOOL  
.....  
WAITS



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# PRACTICAL PROBLEMS OF THE SCHOOL

BY

HARMON EBERT WAITS, A.M.

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

LUDINGTON, MICHIGAN

BENJ. H. SANBORN & CO.

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## PREFACE

THIS book is the outgrowth of several years of experience in attempting to meet and to help other teachers meet the routine problems of the school. The aim in writing the book is to present in a practical form that large group of essential facts with which every teacher must be familiar in order to avoid serious mistakes in the management of a school. The facts are presented in the manner and spirit in which the author has found it necessary for the rank and file of teachers. The subject-matter is made as definite and specific as possible with the thought that many teachers with limited experience are likely to be benefited more in the beginning by specific direction than they are by a general discussion of educational principles. The need for much specific discussion seems evident when we consider that at all times more than fifty per cent of the public school teachers are practically inexperienced, and many other teachers teach year after year with no assistance from a superintendent.

While there has been no attempt to make the book a treatise on pedagogy, an attempt has been made in the book to carry a practical discussion of educational principles and so to concrete them that the reader may become familiar with them and grasp the underlying spirit of the school.

If through the study of this book a few teachers may be able to lay a foundation for a broader growth in teaching, and shall become better able to discriminate a little more closely between those things which are vital and those which are only of slight consequence, the author will feel amply repaid for his efforts.

H. E. W.

Ludington, Michigan  
March, 1920





# CONTENTS

## CHAPTER I

	PAGE
<b>A PROSPECTIVE VIEW . . . . .</b>	<b>1-13</b>
<b>I. The Teacher's Work Fundamental . . . . .</b>	<b>1</b>
a. The variety of schools	
b. The character of activities dependent upon the school	
<b>II. Seeking the Magical . . . . .</b>	<b>2</b>
a. The work of the school accomplished by labor	
<b>III. Diversity among Children . . . . .</b>	<b>3</b>
a. Some causes of diversity	
b. Responsibility of the school	
<b>IV. Reaching the Individual . . . . .</b>	<b>3</b>
a. Making the school elastic	
b. Types of special schools	
c. Method of attack in the small school	
<b>V. Phenomenal Results . . . . .</b>	<b>5</b>
a. Obtained only by neglect of other subjects	
b. Counting the cost	
c. An illustration of bad balance	
<b>VI. The Early Years . . . . .</b>	<b>7</b>
a. Doing fundamental things from the start	
b. A wrong start a handicap in the upper grade	
<b>VII. Kinds of Criticism . . . . .</b>	<b>9</b>
a. From the profession	
b. Appreciating others	
<b>VIII. Results the Test of Theories . . . . .</b>	<b>10</b>
a. Start with facts, not conclusions	

## CONTENTS

## CHAPTER II

PAGE

<b>THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL . . . . .</b>	<b>14-31</b>
<b>I. Importance of a Good Beginning . . . . .</b>	<b>14</b>
a. Attitude of people determined largely by the beginning	
<b>II. Preparation for the First Day . . . . .</b>	<b>14</b>
a. Necessity for preparation before the opening	
<b>III. Sources of Information . . . . .</b>	<b>15</b>
a. The school records	
b. The former teacher	
<b>IV. The Course of Study . . . . .</b>	<b>16</b>
a. Becoming familiar with it	
b. Adjusting the program to it	
<b>V. Classification of Pupils . . . . .</b>	<b>17</b>
a. Classification before the beginning	
b. Organizing the classes before school begins	
<b>VI. Pronunciation of Names . . . . .</b>	<b>18</b>
a. Necessity for accuracy	
b. How to be certain	
<b>VII. The Program. . . . .</b>	<b>19</b>
a. Importance of the program	
b. How it should be made out	
c. Arranging the time for the classes	
<b>VIII. The Rules and Regulations . . . . .</b>	<b>21</b>
a. Unenforced regulations	
b. Following the regulations	
<b>IX. Supplies for the Pupils . . . . .</b>	<b>22</b>
a. Ordering before school	
b. Providing supplies for the first day and week	

# CONTENTS

vii

	PAGE
<b>X. The School Plant . . . . .</b>	<b>22</b>
a. Visiting before the opening of school	
b. Attention necessary before the first day	
c. Influence of the surroundings	
<b>XI. Arranging Details . . . . .</b>	<b>25</b>
a. Getting to school the first morning	
b. Everything ready	
<b>XII. The First Morning . . . . .</b>	<b>25</b>
a. Disposition of early arrivals	
b. Disposition of new pupils	
<b>XIII. Beginning Pupils . . . . .</b>	<b>28</b>
a. Limiting according to age	
<b>XIV. Putting Pupils Back . . . . .</b>	<b>28</b>
a. The danger of haste	
b. The period of trial	

## CHAPTER III

<b>POINT OF VIEW IN DISCIPLINE . . . . .</b>	<b>32-50</b>
<b>I. Importance of Good Discipline . . . . .</b>	<b>32</b>
a. The most important question	
b. A close relation between discipline and quality of work	
x. Two types of teachers in same school	
<b>II. Ability to Control Acquired. . . . .</b>	<b>34</b>
a. Must study discipline as one studies arithmetic	
b. Must have a plan	
<b>III. Ignoring the Question . . . . .</b>	<b>35</b>
a. This type of teacher long on phrases	
x. He is analogous to the weak public official	

	PAGE
<b>IV. Hiding behind Defenses . . . . .</b>	<b>35</b>
a. Training for a democracy	
b. Decrying discipline as despotism	
c. All good may become evils	
<b>V. "Adolescence" and Other Excuses . . . . .</b>	<b>37</b>
a. Some teachers prone to make excuses	
b. Teacher can not shift responsibility for results of his own shortcomings	
<b>VI. Theory vs. Reality in Discipline . . . . .</b>	<b>38</b>
a. The visit to the school of the advocate of freedom	
x. The study hall	
y. Quality of work in the recitation	
z. The scenes in the office	
<b>VII. Three General Conclusions . . . . .</b>	<b>42</b>
a. Teacher has the discipline he stands for	
b. Strong discipline easier than medium	
c. Quality of discipline augments its own kind	
<b>VIII. Mistaken Notions Concerning Discipline . . . . .</b>	<b>43</b>
a. Some think it is indirect	
b. Some think it is direct	
<b>IX. Not Just a Question of Interest . . . . .</b>	<b>44</b>
a. Discipline and interest are mutual	
b. One cannot interest those in disorder	
<b>X. Not a Question of Keeping Pupils Busy . . . . .</b>	<b>44</b>
a. The pupils who are the best supplied are sometimes disorderly	
b. This is a contributing element	
<b>XI. Not Identical with Instructional Skill . . . . .</b>	<b>45</b>
a. Poor teachers often good in discipline	
<b>XII. Not a Question of Sanitation . . . . .</b>	<b>45</b>

## CONTENTS

ix

	PAGE
<b>XIII. Not a Question of the Weather . . . . .</b>	<b>46</b>
a. Strong disciplinarians are insensible to weather changes	
<b>XIV. Not the Former Teacher's Fault . . . . .</b>	<b>46</b>
a. No way to discipline a school so it will stay disciplined for the weak successor	
<b>XV. Parental Co-operation . . . . .</b>	<b>46</b>
a. Parents prone to side with children	
x. Example	
<b>XVI. General Co-operation is Necessary for Strong Discipline . . . . .</b>	<b>48</b>
a. The elements involved in control	
b. Causes for variation in ability	
<b>XVII. Division of the Subject . . . . .</b>	<b>48</b>

## CHAPTER IV

<b>DISCIPLINE IN THE ROOM . . . . .</b>	<b>51-67</b>
<b>I. Govern without Show . . . . .</b>	<b>51</b>
a. Refrain from discussing evils	
x. Avoid lecturing	
<b>II. Seating of the Pupils. . . . .</b>	<b>51</b>
a. Teacher should select seats	
b. Provision for troublesome pupils	
<b>III. Leaving Seats without Permission . . . . .</b>	<b>52</b>
a. Privileges which may be allowed	
<b>IV. Leaving the Room . . . . .</b>	<b>53</b>
a. Permission to be required of all pupils	
b. Number of permissions to be granted at a time	
c. Punishing pupils for asking permission	

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
V. Use of the Waste Basket . . . . .	54
a. The wrong way	
b. The right way	
VI. Only One Pupil to a Seat. . . . .	55
a. Relying upon others for books	
x. Disadvantage	
y. The remedy	
VII. Sharpening Pencils . . . . .	55
a. Borrowing knives a bad practice	
b. How to provide for pencils	
VIII. No Communication without Permission . . . . .	56
a. Communication the source of many disorders	
b. Should be prohibited because it prevents concentration	
c. Not impossible to prohibit	
IX. Leaving the Room without Supervision. . . . .	58
a. Disorder is reflexive	
b. Medium teachers should not try methods of superior ones	
X. Influence of the Substitute . . . . .	59
a. No incompetent person should substitute	
b. Good habits are easily broken	
XI. Some Common but Bad Practices of Teachers . . . . .	59
a. Calling over the heads	
b. Evil of foolish remarks	
c. Using the school for question boxes	
XII. The Manner of the Teacher . . . . .	61
a. The school the reflection of the teacher	
b. The handling of materials and movements to be quiet	

## CONTENTS

xi

	PAGE
<b>XIII. Preparation for the Day's Work . . . . .</b>	<b>62</b>
a. Teacher prepared for work before the day begins	
b. Correcting papers should be done at home	
<b>XIV. Provide Definite Work . . . . .</b>	<b>63</b>
a. Provide tasks and call for them	
b. Hold pupils for it if they neglect duty	
<b>XV. Make the Pupils Comfortable . . . . .</b>	<b>63</b>
a. Seating pupils in proper seats	
b. Position as regards the light	
c. The temperature	
d. The ventilation	
<b>XVI. Relaxation Exercises. . . . .</b>	<b>65</b>
a. Frequency of exercise	
b. Kinds of exercise.	
<b>XVII. Prevention of Idleness . . . . .</b>	<b>66</b>
a. Careful supervision of study period	
b. Symptoms of idleness	

## CHAPTER V

<b>MANAGEMENT OF THE CLASS . . . . .</b>	<b>68-81</b>
<b>I. Signals. . . . .</b>	<b>68</b>
a. Good signals	
b. The bell	
<b>II. Seating of the Class . . . . .</b>	<b>69</b>
a. Every pupil should have his definite seat	
b. Seat the class compactly	
c. Seating pupils of weak attention	
d. Seating defective pupils	
e. Pupils reciting in the regular seats	

	PAGE
<b>III. Position of the Teacher with Reference to the Class . . . . .</b>	<b>70</b>
a. Front position the best	
b. Standing or sitting	
<b>IV. Position of Pupils Reciting . . . . .</b>	<b>71</b>
a. Usually best to stand	
b. The rule should be broken in special instances	
<b>V. Passing Supplies . . . . .</b>	<b>71</b>
a. The use of monitors	
b. Objectionable methods	
c. Passing pencils	
<b>VI. Showing Pictures and Illustrations. . . . .</b>	<b>72</b>
a. Passing the picture along the aisle	
b. Calling the pupils by groups	
c. The evil of crowding around the teacher	
<b>VII. Passing Classes to the Board . . . . .</b>	<b>73</b>
a. Should have definite positions at the board	
b. Methods of passing the classes	
c. Keeping the boards clean	
<b>VIII. Answering without Permission . . . . .</b>	<b>73</b>
a. Recitation must be under the control of the teacher	
b. How the habit arises	
c. How to break the habit	
<b>IX. Remove Distracting Stimuli . . . . .</b>	<b>74</b>
a. Freeing the desks of irrelevant material	
b. Reciting with closed books	
c. Interruptions should not be tolerated	
x. Messengers and questions from pupils	
d. Mixture of oral and written work an evil	



## CONTENTS

xiii

	PAGE
X. Plan and Preparation of the Teacher . . .	76
a. Teacher must know the lesson	
b. The use of the general thought question	
XI. Preparation of the Pupils . . . . .	77
a. Familiarity with lesson necessary to at- tention	
b. Teacher should avoid reciting	
c. Teacher should call for the assignment	
XII. Method of Conducting the Recitation . . .	78
a. Conduct recitation so that attention is necessary	
x. Illustration from arithmetic	
y. Avoid long recitation and ex- clusive attention to one pupil	

## CHAPTER VI

MANAGEMENT OF THE PLAYGROUND . . . . .	82-88
I. Supervision Necessary . . . . .	82
a. Prevent difficulties rather than adjust them	
b. Participation in play a good thing	
II. Working at Recess . . . . .	83
a. Recess periods should not be used for work	
x. Teacher needs the recreation	
y. Pupils should not be deprived of recreation	
b. Correcting work at this time is ob- jectionable	
III. Keeping Pupils in at Recess . . . . .	84
a. Objectionable, whether for punishment or to make up work	
x. Unfits pupils for work during the session	

	PAGE
b. Poor lessons not always the fault of the pupil	
x. Causes should be determined and proper remedies applied	
<b>IV. Remove Suggestive Objects . . . . .</b>	<b>84</b>
a. Teacher should inspect the ground daily	
x. Dangers from Hallowe'en	
y. Accumulations over Sunday	
b. Illustrations	
x. The wheel; the whisky bottle	
c. Putting suggestions into practice	
x. The Wild West incident	
<b>V. Teaching New Games . . . . .</b>	<b>86</b>
a. Occupation is the best means of control	
b. Simple equipment	
<b>VI. Equipment of the Ground . . . . .</b>	<b>86</b>
a. Some popular equipment	
b. Some popular games	
<b>VII. Benefits of Play . . . . .</b>	<b>89</b>
a. The best health tonic	
x. Present-day needs requires special emphasis on it	
b. Play is educative	
c. Play is a moral safeguard	

## CHAPTER VII

<b>PUNISHMENT . . . . .</b>	<b>89-107</b>
<b>I. Publicity Objectionable . . . . .</b>	<b>89</b>
a. The evil of lecturing	
b. The evil of punishing in public	
<b>II. Improper Punishments . . . . .</b>	<b>90</b>
a. Punishments that are wrong in spirit	
b. Tying cloths over the mouth, washing	

# CONTENTS

XV

PAGE

out the mouth, placing with the  
opposite sex, fatiguing punish-  
ments, forced apologies

<b>III. Low Grading as a Punishment . . . .</b>	<b>93</b>
a. Scholarship and conduct to be rated independently	
b. Motives for conduct to be examined and met	
<b>IV. Appealing in Improper Ways . . . .</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>V. Use of Tact . . . . .</b>	<b>95</b>
a. Illustration of avoiding the necessity for punishment	
b. Removing temptation	
c. Finding the guilty	
<b>VI. On Being Annoyed . . . . .</b>	<b>96</b>
a. Inviting trouble	
b. Illustration of letting an evil exhaust itself	
<b>VII. Corporal Punishment . . . . .</b>	<b>97</b>
a. Its limitations	
b. Its relation to strong discipline	
c. Seeking the cause for its necessity	
d. Treatment of upper-grade pupils	
<b>VIII. Punishing the Teacher . . . . .</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>IX. Detention as a Means of Punishment . . .</b>	<b>99</b>
a. When to detain	
b. Character of the work to be done	
c. Offenses which may be thus punished	
<b>X. Isolation as a Means of Punishment . . .</b>	<b>101</b>
a. Method of last resort	
<b>XI. Sending Pupils Home . . . . .</b>	<b>102</b>
a. The evil	
b. The parent's attitude	

	PAGE
<b>XII. Resorting to Higher Authority.</b>	103
a. Teacher should solve his own problems alone	
b. The use of higher authority	
<b>XIII. Teacher's Relation to the Parent</b>	103
a. Holding the pupil to account	
b. Manner of conferring with the parent	
<b>XIV. Complaining to the Parent</b>	105
a. Reporting outside matter	
<b>XV. Ridicule, Sarcasm, and Irony</b>	106

## CHAPTER VIII

<b>THE ASSIGNMENT</b>	108-123
<b>I. Importance of the Assignment</b>	108
a. The efficiency of teacher shown in the assignment	
b. The greater part of school evils springs from assignments	
<b>II. Preparation of the Teacher for the Assignment</b>	108
a. Adjustment of lesson to ability and age of class	
b. Teacher must be familiar with lesson	
c. Teacher should imagine himself in the place of the pupil	
<b>III. Preparation of the Pupils for the Assignment</b>	110
a. Should know how to proceed	
x. Book explanations are inadequate	
b. Illustration from an assignment in <i>Merchant of Venice</i>	
c. Elimination of lost time the great need of the school	

# CONTENTS

xvii

	PAGE
<b>IV. How Much Aid to Give the Pupils. . . .</b>	<b>112</b>
a. Some aid is imperative with certain pupils	
x. Difficult to make the required adjustment	
b. Much loss of time results from neglect	
<b>V. Getting the Assignment from the Text . . .</b>	<b>113</b>
a. Pupils must be taught to master the text	
x. Young pupils need the aid	
y. All new subjects require special aid	
b. Supplement the text with oral instruction	
<b>VI. Adapting the Text to the Pupils . . . .</b>	<b>116</b>
a. Some common faults and limitations of texts	
b. Following the book may be an evil	
c. Spirit of attack should guide the teacher	
<b>VII. Making the Assignment Definite . . . .</b>	<b>118</b>
a. Every pupil should know what is required	
b. Outside matter should be obtainable	
c. How to provide for inadequate reference	
d. Inquiring from others a loose injunction	
<b>VIII. Length of the Assignment . . . .</b>	<b>119</b>
a. Easy to underestimate the time required for assignment	
x. Guarding against this mistake	
b. Illustration of overassignment	
c. Augmenting the difficulty through threats	
d. Evil of assigning by pages	

## CHAPTER IX

PAGE

<b>EVERYDAY PROBLEMS IN INSTRUCTION . . .</b>	<b>124-159</b>
<b>I. The Question of Method . . . . .</b>	<b>124</b>
a. Overstressing the importance of a particular method	
<b>II. Some Definite Method Needed . . . . .</b>	<b>125</b>
a. Teacher should follow conventional methods at the start	
<b>III. Some Tests of a Good Method . . . . .</b>	<b>125</b>
a. Good methods may not be apparent for a long time	
x. Illustrated from writing, reading, music	
y. Frequent change in method is an evil	
<b>IV. Similarity of Treatment of Subjects . . . . .</b>	<b>127</b>
a. Analysis of subject-matter into simple units	
x. Illustration from arithmetic	
<b>V. The Question of Interest . . . . .</b>	<b>128</b>
a. Difference between interest and entertainment	
x. Illustrated from algebra	
<b>VI. Relative Value of Subjects . . . . .</b>	<b>129</b>
a. Dependent upon the way in which they are taught	
b. Attitude of mind is more important than the facts of a subject	
x. Illustration from reasoning cube root	
c. Rules of procedure are of little value	
x. Illustration	
d. The scientific attitude is the rule in and out of school	

# CONTENTS

xix

	PAGE
<b>VII. Quantity Is Not Power . . . . .</b>	<b>131</b>
a. Making a record in quantity does not assure quality	
x. Reading a given number of books	
y. Solving a given number of problems	
<b>VIII. Experience the Basis of Teaching . . . . .</b>	<b>132</b>
a. Books often fail at this point	
b. The attempt of children to supply experience by pictures	
c. Apperception followed in every at- tempt to convey knowledge	
<b>IX. Presenting a New Topic . . . . .</b>	<b>134</b>
a. Include as little as possible in explana- tion	
b. Keep close to the child's vocabulary	
<b>X. Forms and Illustrations . . . . .</b>	<b>134</b>
a. Illustrations should be in correct form	
b. Should be incapable of misinterpre- tation	
x. <i>their</i> and <i>there</i>	
<b>XI. Irrelevant Illustrations . . . . .</b>	<b>135</b>
a. Illustration from fractions	
b. Placing intervening conceptions be- tween pupil and subject	
x. Illustration from music	
<b>XII. Testing the Content of the Mind . . . . .</b>	<b>136</b>
a. The mental content of the mind deter- mines interpretation	
x. Illustrations from reading	
b. Pupils interpret statements literally	
x. "Lay me down"	
y. The movement of the earth	

	PAGE
<b>XIII. Reality in Instruction . . . . .</b>	<b>139</b>
a. Things should be dealt with as they are	
x. Fanciful methods are misleading	
b. Instructing a class in borrowing	
c. Teaching false names of figures	
d. Teaching phonics by animate and inanimate things	
e. The map in geography to hang right	
<b>XIV. The Conventional Form . . . . .</b>	<b>142</b>
a. Making figures and letters in the conventional way	
b. Teaching terms to be discarded	
c. Conforming to convention is a necessity	
<b>XV. Learning to Do by Doing . . . . .</b>	<b>143</b>
a. Inaccuracy of knowledge shown by application	
b. Principles should be applied at once	
x. Illustrations from arithmetic, language, etc.	
c. Application clarifies knowledge	
<b>XVI. Developing from the Class . . . . .</b>	<b>145</b>
a. A clear explanation is needed in place of a long fatiguing one	
x. Illustration from word development	
b. The answer from one pupil is not class development	
<b>XVII. Concert Work . . . . .</b>	<b>147</b>
a. The quality of concert work easily misjudged	
x. Repeating is common	
y. Repeaters illustrated in music	



# CONTENTS

xxi

	PAGE
b. Some board work is of the concert type	
<b>XVIII. Proper Direction vs. Driving . . . . .</b>	<b>149</b>
a. Lack of preparation of a class should be suggestive	
b. A change of method may result in a great change	
x. Illustration from spelling	
<b>XIX. Liking the Subject . . . . .</b>	<b>151</b>
a. Liking the subject is partly teacher and partly pupil	
b. Teacher should find the secret of successful teachers	
<b>XX. Variation in Aptitudes . . . . .</b>	<b>152</b>
a. Sometimes certain qualities run in families	
<b>XXI. Studying the Individual . . . . .</b>	<b>153</b>
a. Some pupils can keep up only with special help	
x. How to give the special help	
<b>XXII. Qualities Better Than Knowledge . . . . .</b>	<b>153</b>
a. Technical facts not a test of a school	
b. Formal moral phrases not a test of morals	
<b>XXIII. Beautiful but Useless . . . . .</b>	<b>154</b>
a. The test of a thing is its value	
b. Introducing things the teacher likes	
x. French and Spanish	
<b>XXIV. Form Does Not Determine Content . . . . .</b>	<b>155</b>
a. Imitating another teacher illustrated from writing	
<b>XXV. Holding What is Taught . . . . .</b>	<b>156</b>
a. Frequent return to fundamental lines of the subject	

## CHAPTER X

	PAGE
<b>CONDUCTING THE RECITATION . . . . .</b>	<b>160-188</b>
<b>I. Purpose of the Recitation. . . . .</b>	<b>160</b>
a. Function of the recitation	
b. Quality of school depends upon it	
c. It reveals the professional viewpoint of the teacher	
<b>II. Recitation Should Have a Plan . . . . .</b>	<b>160</b>
a. Requires time and thought to determine it	
b. Mere incidents carry away the teacher without a plan	
c. Pupils are not good guides for a recitation	
x. Things that influence choice	
y. Tricks of older pupils	
<b>III. Springing Surprises . . . . .</b>	<b>162</b>
a. Pupils should know the entire requirement of recitation	
b. Springing surprises is not teaching	
<b>IV. Use of the Text in the Recitation . . . . .</b>	<b>162</b>
a. Teacher must grasp lesson as a unit	
b. The question should be toward vital things	
c. Not always a good plan to follow a text	
<b>V. Fragmentary Teaching . . . . .</b>	<b>163</b>
a. All instruction should be connected	
b. Teacher should have in mind a clear conception of fundamentals	
c. Rounding-up periods are a good thing	
<b>VI. Overworking the Bright Pupil . . . . .</b>	<b>165</b>
a. The device in arithmetic—thinking of two numbers	
b. Better devices for drill	

# CONTENTS

xxiii

	PAGE
c. Objection to "spelling down"	
d. Reading until a mistake is made	
e. The volunteer recitation	
<b>VII. Working All the Pupils . . . . .</b>	<b>168</b>
a. A good test of the teacher	
b. Illustration from seventh-grade reading	
<b>VIII. Profiting through Doing . . . . .</b>	<b>170</b>
a. The principle is one of the oldest	
b. Teacher should train pupils to do for themselves	
c. Results may deceive the teacher	
d. Illustrations from music	
x. Singing with pupils	
y. Beating time	
e. Explanation of a problem	
f. Pronouncing words for the pupils	
g. Every pupil should recite every day as much as possible of lesson	
<b>IX. Wasteful Methods . . . . .</b>	<b>175</b>
a. Walking to the front, rising	
b. Solving a problem by fragments	
<b>X. Talking the Time Away . . . . .</b>	<b>176</b>
a. Two types of teachers of reading	
<b>XI. Dramatization . . . . .</b>	<b>178</b>
a. Caution about overemphasis	
b. Ability in one direction means a sacrifice in another	
<b>XII. Nature of Criticism . . . . .</b>	<b>178</b>
a. The purpose is to inspire and to improve	
b. Criticism easily degenerates into ridicule	
c. Timidity and caution results from bad criticism	
<b>XIII. Wrong Kinds of Criticism . . . . .</b>	<b>180</b>
a. The evil of reducing an answer to absurdity	

	PAGE
b. Exhibiting error not a good form of criticism	
c. Criticize vital things	
x. Illustration from reading	
d. Chronic scolding not criticism	
<b>XIV. The Evil of Entertaining . . . . .</b>	<b>182</b>
a. Drudgery the result of poor teaching	
b. The secret of liking a study	
c. Some books have been entertaining rather than instructive	
<b>XV. Effect of Praise . . . . .</b>	<b>183</b>
a. Desire for approval is fundamental	
<b>XVI. Other Incentives . . . . .</b>	<b>184</b>
a. Material rewards growing in disfavor	
b. The grade as a stimulus	
x. Low grading and high grading	
<b>XVII. Mannerisms . . . . .</b>	<b>186</b>
a. Repetition of the answer	
b. Typical phrases	
c. Nodding the head	
d. Looking at the watch	
e. Yelling habit	

## CHAPTER XI

<b>EXCEPTIONS TO THE RULE . . . . .</b>	<b>189-202</b>
<b>I. The Unpromising Child . . . . .</b>	<b>189</b>
a. The difficulty of predicting the future of a child	
b. The school must attempt to reach all	
<b>II. The Discouraged Pupil . . . . .</b>	<b>190</b>
a. Effect of discouragement on attendance	
<b>III. The Timid Pupil . . . . .</b>	<b>192</b>
a. Evidences of timidity	

# CONTENTS

XXV

	PAGE
b. Treatment of the timid pupil	
IV. The Slow Pupil . . . . .	193
a. Methods of educating the slow pupil	
x. Overcoming difficulties with greater skill	
b. Some pupils only temporarily slow	
V. The Pupil of Quick Temper . . . . .	195
a. The cause and the treatment	
VI. Pupils with Nervous Affliction. . . . .	196
a. Manifestation in disorder	
b. Suggested treatment	
VII. The Child of the Poor . . . . .	197
a. Should be spared humiliation	
VIII. The Untidy Pupil . . . . .	197
a. Difficulties of the problem	
b. Suggested remedy	
IX. The Incurable Pupil . . . . .	198
a. Expelling the pupil	
X. Lacking in Capacity . . . . .	199
a. The best course for the child	
XI. The Dreamer . . . . .	200
a. Symptoms of the dreamer	
b. Breaking the habit	
XII. The Left-Handed Pupil . . . . .	200
a. Tendencies of left-handed pupils	

## CHAPTER XII

THE TEACHER . . . . .	203-220
I. The Teacher's Work Difficult. . . . .	203
a. The mind is the most complicated of all things	
b. Pupils are from all classes and types	

	PAGE
x. Influence of heredity	
y. Influence of the home	
c. Three departments of government centered in teacher	
<b>II. The Teacher the Chief Element . . . .</b>	<b>204</b>
a. The benefits gained from study dependent upon teacher	
b. The school reflects the teacher	
<b>III. Balance Needed in the Teacher . . . .</b>	<b>205</b>
a. Need of freedom from eccentricities	
b. Need of freedom and breadth of view	
c. Should be able to appreciate the views of others	
<b>IV. Neither Too Much Work nor Too Much Play. . . .</b>	<b>205</b>
a. Two elements in all communities	
b. Must not attempt to lead everything	
<b>V. Balance as to Dress . . . . .</b>	<b>206</b>
a. Possible to overdress and underdress	
<b>VI. Sanity in Religion . . . . .</b>	<b>206</b>
a. The religious extremist the worst of all	
b. The teacher must teach children of all sects	
c. School time cannot be devoted to making converts	
d. Formal teaching of religion unnecessary	
<b>VII. The Teacher a Student of Himself. . . .</b>	<b>207</b>
a. Finding and correcting one's weaknesses	
b. Reading professional literature and associating with other teachers	
<b>VIII. Adaptability of the Teacher . . . . .</b>	<b>208</b>
a. Teacher must adapt himself to the conditions	
b. Progress not made by faultfinding and coercion	

# CONTENTS

xxvii

	PAGE
c. Let the school pay its expenses	
<b>IX. Being Too Sensitive . . . . .</b>	<b>210</b>
a. Criticism arises from different reasons	
b. Classes of school cranks	
<b>X. Freedom from Cross Grain . . . . .</b>	<b>210</b>
a. The pessimist blocks his own way	
b. How pessimism is manifested	
<b>XI. Physical Efficiency . . . . .</b>	<b>211</b>
a. Good physical trim is the first requisite	
b. The greatest energies may be dissipated	
x. Dancing	
y. Revivals	
z. Correcting too many papers	
<b>XII. Scholarship of the Teacher . . . . .</b>	<b>213</b>
a. Knowledge is his stock in trade	
x. Can't know all but must know certain things	
b. Scholarship needs accuracy rather than extensiveness	
c. One may be highly educated and be a failure	
d. Evils of inaccuracy in scholarship	
e. Effect of good scholarship upon the pupils	
f. Keeping fit	
<b>XIII. Personal Habits. . . . .</b>	<b>215</b>
a. Teacher is a model	
b. Pupils often lack model in the home	
c. Good habits demanded	
d. The committee	
e. The minister	
<b>XIV. Spirit and Attitude . . . . .</b>	<b>217</b>
a. The teacher's spirit gives color to his work	

	PAGE
x. Brooding is dangerous	
y. Teaching has its charms	
z. No calling is free from annoyances	
b. The teacher's record is his mainstay	
x. Giving poor service the last year	
<b>XV. Congeniality</b> . . . . .	218
a. Personal qualities count for much in every calling	
x. Illustrated by two types of business man	
b. The voice of the teacher and manner convey his quality	

## CHAPTER XIII

<b>THE TEACHER AND THE COMMUNITY</b> . . . . .	221-240
<b>I. Origin and Similarity of Problems.</b> . . . .	221
a. Communities are much alike	
x. Same types of people	
b. Some problems arise from the teacher himself	
c. The teacher's problem to understand the conditions	
<b>II. Avoid Hasty Judgment</b> . . . . .	221
a. Disbelieve a large part of what you hear	
b. The friends and the enemies of the former teacher	
<b>III. The Former Teacher.</b> . . . .	222
a. Give little heed to those who tell tales about your predecessor	
<b>IV. Influence in the Community</b> . . . . .	223
a. Teacher must be in favor to do his best work	
x. Should let his good qualities be known	



# CONTENTS

xxix

	PAGE
<b>V. The Treatment of the Teacher by the Community . . . . .</b>	224
a. Depends largely upon the teacher	
x. Contrast of two types	
b. Teacher in the rural community	
<b>VI. Peddling Trouble . . . . .</b>	226
a. Every occupation has its drawbacks and should keep its troubles to itself	
b. Bringing matters before the school board unnecessarily	
<b>VII. Long Investigations . . . . .</b>	227
a. Long investigations inexpedient and often harmful	
x. Illustration	
<b>VIII. Avoid Factional Strife . . . . .</b>	228
a. Origin of factional strife in petty dis- agreements	
b. Be the teacher of all the people	
<b>IX. Begin Where the Community Is . . . . .</b>	229
a. Passing from one community to another	
b. Endeavor to lead, not to drive	
<b>X. Attitude toward the School . . . . .</b>	229
a. Taking undue privileges	
x. The school hours	
y. Private work and the school	
<b>XI. The Teacher's Conduct . . . . .</b>	230
a. Teacher is different from others	
b. Questionable company	
<b>XII. Discretion of the Teacher . . . . .</b>	233
a. The teacher's statements should be free from fault	
x. No defects of children to be dis- cussed	
b. Illustration of the feeble-minded girl	

	PAGE
c. Child of the broken home	
<b>XIII. The False Tongue</b> . . . . .	235
a. It lashes all in public life	
x. President of the state university	
b. Many types of people	
x. Some want injustice	
c. The school stands for equality	
d. Never run after false reports	
<b>XIV. The Teacher's Boarding Place</b> . . . . .	238
a. The character of accommodations	
b. Never repeat family gossip	

## CHAPTER XIV

<b>THE PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITY</b> . . . . .	241-259
<b>I. Parent Responsible for the Child's Physical Nature</b> . . . . .	241
a. The effects of inheritance	
b. Effects of physical conditions under which child lives	
x. Cleanliness and purity essential to vigor	
1. Exhibit of Illinois State Board of Health	
<b>II. Parent Responsible for the Child's Moral Nature</b> . . . . .	242
a. Effect of inheritance and training	
x. Rebellion in three generations	
<b>III. Responsibility for Control</b> . . . . .	243
a. Both parents should agree in their methods of control	
x. Teacher's problem arises from lack of control in the home	

	PAGE
<b>IV. The Parent's Example . . . . .</b>	244
a. Example is stronger than advice	
x. The child imitates his parent in the home	
y. Illustration of the two boys	
b. The father taking pride in dissipation	
<b>V. Effect of Parent's Attitude . . . . .</b>	247
a. The child adopts his parent's attitude toward truth	
b. The effect of incidental impressions	
<b>VI. Responsibility for Attendance at School . . . . .</b>	248
a. Attendance is largely a habit	
x. Effect of recurring absence	
<b>VII. Entering Children Too Young . . . . .</b>	249
a. Ignorance is one cause	
b. Desire of parents to free themselves from care of the child	
<b>VIII. Knowledge of the Child . . . . .</b>	250
a. Parents seldom know their own children	
b. Parent should know the habits of the child, his industry, his trustworthiness	
x. Sending away does not change the characteristics of the child	
<b>IX. The Child Outside of School Hours . . . . .</b>	251
a. Attitude toward regulations determined by associations and practices out of school	
b. Outside activities must be controlled by parent	
<b>X. Attempting Good Things in Poor Ways. . . . .</b>	252
a. The evil of bribing	
b. Placing temptation in the child's way	

	PAGE
<b>XI. The Wild-Oats Doctrine . . . . .</b>	<b>254</b>
a. The danger of evil practices	
b. The wrong attitude of the public	
<b>XII. Appreciation of Education . . . . .</b>	<b>255</b>
a. The importance of remaining in school	
<b>XIII. The Parent's First Interest . . . . .</b>	<b>257</b>
a. Should be greater than outside interests	
b. The danger of neglecting the child	

## CHAPTER XV

<b>UPPER-GRADE READING . . . . .</b>	<b>260-274</b>
<b>I. Divisions of Reading. . . . .</b>	<b>260</b>
a. Grades one to four	
b. Grades five to eight	
<b>II. Purposes of Reading. . . . .</b>	<b>261</b>
a. Expression of feeling as important as expression of thought	
b. Pronunciation and diction	
c. Training the speaking voice	
<b>III. False Notions about Reading . . . . .</b>	<b>262</b>
a. Oral reading as necessary as silent reading in upper grades	
b. Importance of reading selections of literary value	
c. Expression in reading	
x. Does not follow thought	
<b>IV. Why Expression Does Not Follow Thought and Feeling. . . . .</b>	<b>264</b>
a. Self-expression and the interpretation of another's thought	
b. Literary forms of expression different from colloquial	

# CONTENTS

xxxiii

	PAGE
c. Power of expression comes through practice	
<b>V. How to Get Expression . . . . .</b>	267
a. Begin with simple selections	
b. Do not attempt too much	
c. Formal training necessary	
x. Pitch	
y. Rate	
<b>VI. How to Get Thought. . . . .</b>	269
a. Selections that require no outside knowledge	
b. Selections that require outside knowledge	
x. Historical setting	
y. Geographical setting	
z. Scientific facts underlying the selection	
<b>VII. The Reading Recitation . . . . .</b>	271
a. Aim and preparation necessary	
b. Much practice in oral reading	
c. Teacher's criticism should be vital	
d. Assignments should be definite	
<b>VIII. Some General Suggestions . . . . .</b>	273
a. Let the taste for reading take care of itself	
b. Do not let pupils commit a piece to memory until they can read it well	
<b>INDEX . . . . .</b>	275



## CHAPTER I

### A PROSPECTIVE VIEW

**The Teacher's Work Fundamental.** The month of September each year witnesses the opening of the public schools. Every school from the most obscure one-room school to the most famous university with its two score of buildings and hundreds of teachers to accommodate its needs is open to carry on the great process of education. These doors are open in our country to all on equal terms; to the rich and the poor, to the white and the black they offer equal opportunity to pursue a course of preparation for any calling. This preparation we recognize as indispensable to self-support and good citizenship.

If, by some magic power, we should take away for one day the impressions which have been made by the schools upon the minds of all the men, women, and children of the country, a universal paralysis would infect every business and calling in life. We should scarcely be able to perform a single business transaction or professional act. No bank, store, or office could transact its routine of business; the click of the telegraphic instruments in the thousands of offices throughout the country would cease to convey human thought; no newspaper could be published or read; religious and secular rites and ceremonies would be impossible for

## 2 PRACTICAL PROBLEMS OF THE SCHOOL

the day; not a dose of medicine could be given in safety to the sick; no operation could be performed by a surgeon to relieve a sufferer; indeed, it is difficult to discover what business activity would be possible under these conditions. The teacher's work, then, measured in terms of service is unsurpassed by that performed by any other social group. It is essential to the efficiency of all groups.

**Seeking the Magical.** The school performs a useful and a fundamental work, but it cannot do magical things. It is not, perhaps, possible for it to reach every desirable need. Whatever it accomplishes must be done in the same manner that all other work of the world is done: by persistent labor. There is nothing in school which can be accomplished by magical methods. School authorities often seek teachers of imaginary powers to teach in their schools, when the kind of teacher most needed is one who is industrious and skilled in the application of well-known principles of teaching. Such authorities do not seek teachers; they hunt for magicians, snake charmers, and Pied Pipers. This attitude makes it easy for the charlatan and the demagog to prevail over teachers of worth. The quack exists in education just as he does in the practice of medicine. This attitude leads to the selection of the teachers on "appearances." Many school boards use the same basis of selection of the teacher that they would in choosing a horse—they seek "a good looker." Superintendents are sometimes guilty of such superficiality. Why a superintendent



refuses to recommend a teacher who is superior in instruction, but not physically beautiful, is difficult to determine. Children often think their teachers are beautiful because they possess genuine qualities, when others think they are homely.

**Diversity among Children.** It is impossible for the teacher to accomplish extraordinary things in school because of the diversity among his pupils. The various inequalities found in the school are largely beyond the teacher's control. The teacher must work with all classes and conditions. The habits of life, inheritance, and home opportunities may place serious obstacles in the way of the teacher. Some children are the offspring of alcoholics, diseased, and licentious persons, and those who spend their energies in riotous living. Others get little more than scanty food and clothing; there is no intellectual equipment upon which to build. The child who begins school at the age of six must have a mental equipment just as definite in its character as the pupil who passes from the elementary school to the high school, or from the high school to college. If the child's preparation by the "school of infancy" is inadequate, his progress in school will be difficult. A large majority of pupils, however, are to be considered normal; these should make regular progress from year to year.

**Reaching the Individual.** The problem of the school is to reach every individual if possible. Aptitudes and capacities among pupils differ widely, but these facts must not prevent the teacher from making

## 4 PRACTICAL PROBLEMS OF THE SCHOOL

every reasonable effort to stimulate growth in every pupil. No teacher can discharge his duty toward certain pupils by pointing to the fact that they are too stupid to learn, that the home conditions are bad, that the preceding teacher was thus and so, that the pupil is subnormal, and like excuses. Some teachers assume that these pupils are incapable of doing the work of the grade and must fail, and if they are compelled to take a year's work over, there will be no further difficulty; but experience shows that failure is not the remedy for such cases: the remedy is greater stress on the fundamental principles of instruction, and more individual work for these unusual cases. A visit to a well-conducted school for subnormals will convince the teacher that a large part of the pupils given up as hopeless may be instructed by methods similar to those employed for normal children; the only difference lies in the intensity of application. Many of these pupils are led to accomplish work which approaches very closely the work done by normal pupils. These special schools are needed in large systems where the aggregate of cases is large, but in small systems the regular school must meet the needs. The number of cases is usually very small; it should not amount to more than one or two pupils to the room.

In recent years there have been many attempts to reach unusual conditions met by the teacher. We recognize that it is un-American as well as unprofitable to neglect any group of children. We have established for this reason schools for the blind, the deaf,

the feeble-minded, the tubercular, the crippled, and other classes. Recent changes in the attitude of teachers and a better understanding of scientific teaching have saved scores of children who formerly were ignored and permitted to grow to maturity in ignorance. To reach these cases in a small way in the local school is a high social service.

Teachers should be skillful enough in their instruction to enable normal pupils, at least, to accomplish the work of the school without personal instruction being done by the parent in the home. This seems a low standard, but it is one which is not being met by some teachers. Many children who now stay in school would fail and leave school if they were not assisted almost daily in their work by their parents. After the parent has spent a hard day at his own work, it is unfair to ask him to give his evenings to patching up the mistakes of a bungling teacher, in order to enable his child to accomplish the work of the grade. The parent is rarely fitted to do the work properly, for even if he has sufficient education, he has not kept up with the changes in school methods. Parents have about all they can do to provide for their children, to pay taxes to support the schools, without, at the same time, performing the work of the teacher.

**Phenomenal Results.** The teacher who does his duty by all classes of pupils in his school is not likely to produce phenomenal results. At least his results in any subject are not likely to surpass those attained by efficient teachers in other schools. Superior results

## 6 PRACTICAL PROBLEMS OF THE SCHOOL

in schools are often merely a matter of emphasis. When the work of a teacher becomes very conspicuous for its excellency in a certain subject, there is usually found some subject or subjects on the teacher's program which are greatly neglected. Almost any teacher may produce superior results in any subject by overemphasis. A teacher who gives four periods a day to primary reading should accomplish more than a teacher who gives only two periods to reading. A teacher who gives five periods a week to a subject should of course attain a better standard than the teacher who gives only two or three periods a week to the subject. A teacher who confines his time to the strongest pupils and neglects the weaker pupils will of necessity cover more work and at the same time do a better quality of work than the teacher who attempts to enable all of his pupils to attain a fair standard. The teacher should not strive to break standards in a few subjects with a few pupils, but should attempt to extend the benefits to all the pupils of his school in as many subjects as possible. Teachers are inclined very strongly toward overemphasis of a few special things at the expense of others in the curriculum. The place of emphasis is usually determined by the personal likes of the teacher.

A group of teachers visited a ward school in a city of several thousand inhabitants. The first room they entered was engaged in a reading lesson. The teacher in charge said, "I am glad to see you; I shall change my program just a little because I want you to see our

work in 'Hiawatha.' " The work was presented for their benefit; it was most excellent; the teachers felt chagrined that their work of a similar character was so inferior to what they had seen. They thanked the teacher for the fine exhibition, and entered another room across the hall. Upon entering, the teacher remarked, "We are doing such beautiful work in 'Hiawatha,' and I must give you a chance to see it." The teachers did not object to a second production of such an excellent performance, and gladly welcomed it. The quality was most excellent and compared favorably with what they had seen in the previous room. They passed on to another room, but were surprised to be confronted with a third exhibition on "Hiawatha." During the morning they witnessed five performances of "Hiawatha."

The other work which they saw was below the standard of fair results. In music they found the pupils in the fifth grade doing third-grade work, writing and spelling were given each two periods a week on the program. It thus becomes evident that it is impossible to pass a correct judgment on the work of a teacher until all the facts are known. Many of our so-called "experts" would lose their "superior qualities" if they were required to meet the conditions in all subjects and with all pupils which the rank and file of teachers must meet

**The Early Years.** Experience shows that many pupils remain in school only a few years. For this reason the teacher must begin early to give his pupils

## 8 PRACTICAL PROBLEMS OF THE SCHOOL

a knowledge of fundamentals. There are some things in the school which have no substitute and which are of prime importance. It is a misfortune for a pupil to be in school two or three years before he attempts to do work along these fundamental lines. A boy whose father is a day laborer enters the school at six and a half years of age. The teacher begins by teaching him rimes and jingles, to sing songs, to dance folk dances, to recite gems, lay sticks, and cut magical creatures from paper. All of these things are modern and they are good, but the evil arises by permitting them to crowd out everything else which has been found indispensable in an education. If these things deprive a boy of the ability to read, they have not yielded a return which is an adequate substitute. Every child must learn to read; there is no work a teacher can do in the first year which is more important, and no work should be permitted to displace it. Many teachers are able to teach these fundamental things and do the other work in addition, but it is impossible under some conditions for other teachers to do it; these invariably should eliminate the work of lesser importance. A boy who has spent one year in school without acquiring the ability to recognize one word, and who has not acquired the ability to write his name, has lost almost a year of school, regardless of how many dances, how many songs, or how many rimes he may have learned. The loss becomes evident when he is placed the next year among pupils who have been taught to read from the first day of school.

They are able to read from an average second reader, gather thought from a printed page, and become more independent each day, while he is as dumb and helpless as if the book were printed in a foreign language. If we should follow this pupil through the subsequent years, and watch his progress as compared with the other pupils, we should find him a year behind those who started earlier in their reading. In the fifth or sixth grade or later, perhaps, he begins to feel the pressure to quit school. The teacher longs for just one more year; she knows how much he would gain if the family could sacrifice in some manner to give him just one more year in school. He could round out the elements of an education. We just now begin to understand and to measure the loss of the first year. The dances, the songs, and the other things have been forgotten, and they are useless as a means of helping the pupil in the very thing he will need most after leaving school.

No attempt is made here to discredit the exercises in the schools which add cheer to the school, which store the mind with fine sentiments and principles; the dancing and the singing are not to be abandoned. The question is merely one of moderation and a recognition of certain work of the school, which conditions the progress in later years.

**Kinds of Criticism.** There are different kinds of criticism which the teacher meets in his work; some of the most unjust comes from members of his own profession. Teachers as a class need to cultivate a

## 10 PRACTICAL PROBLEMS OF THE SCHOOL

higher appreciation of the good qualities of their associates and contemporaries. President-emeritus Eliot of Harvard has said that it requires a much higher type of intelligence to discern the good in others than to criticise the evils involved in their work. A large majority of teachers consider the opposite to be true. When a school is visited by outside teachers, they are likely to seek evidences of inferior work and to permit this attitude to blind them to everything praiseworthy. If they see work superior to that done in their own schools, they criticise it on the basis of being "too good." If the result is accomplished by a different method, many teachers seem unable to recognize any good whatsoever. Criticism often arises from different standards of measurement as to what constitutes excellent work, but a large part of the criticism one hears, when reduced to its lowest terms, is a question of one teacher wishing to appear superior to others, or somewhat better than his work would justify. It is easy to find fault and to criticise any school on some pretext; no school is perfect in all things; the schools are attempting too many lines of work to approach perfection in many of them. If they were to attempt to reduce their lines of work, they could be sharply criticised because of "narrowness and one-sidedness." The teacher who meets some of this criticism in his work should take it philosophically and with as little disturbance as possible.

**Results the Test of Theories.** The only true test of our plans is the reaction of the pupils we instruct



when these theories are applied. Theorists get along beautifully if they confine the elaboration of their schemes to teachers, but when they proceed to illustrate all the supposed possibilities with children, their calculations shrink very perceptibly. The best place to discover educational methods which stand the test of the school is in the school. Any plan worked out in an office and not based upon the application in the school will be defective in many particulars. We are so anxious to reach results in educational method that we often start with conclusions and then endeavor to force pupils to prove them. So many things have been announced as "definitely proved" in recent years that we need to exercise caution about new proclamations until they have been tested out in schools other than those presided over by those proclaiming the "discovery." Conclusions are dependent upon so many conditions that, unless one knows and is able to place a correct value on all of the elements involved, it is impossible to determine the extent of their reliability. The particular medicine one uses is not so important in the last analysis; the chief thing is the cure for human ignorance.

#### QUESTIONS

1. Show how the efficiency of a nation is related to the education of its people. Make a list of common occupations which are closed to persons without at least the rudiments of an education.
2. How do you account for such great diversity among pupils?

## 12 PRACTICAL PROBLEMS OF THE SCHOOL

3. What influences in the home and community life of pupils are especially antagonistic to the work of the teacher? Mention influences over which the teacher has little or no control. Mention some conditions vitally affecting the work of the teacher which he might improve.

4. Name a few groups of pupils especially difficult to instruct, and explain how the modern school attempts to educate them.

5. Find out the total and the per capita cost of maintaining the dependent classes of your community and state. Compare the cost of this maintenance with the cost of maintaining some college or university of your state.

6. How would you give individual aid to a backward pupil in your school?

7. A pupil is sometimes backward, but later becomes strong in his work; sometimes the opposite is true. State common causes of these changes in the progress of a pupil, illustrating your answer with specific examples.

8. Have you noticed that some pupils have great difficulty in learning some kinds of work, but find others unusually easy? What should be the attitude of the teacher toward such pupils?

9. How may the teacher eliminate the necessity for home study on the part of pupils in the elementary school? What are the chief objections to home study?

10. What evils are likely to follow in a school where the teacher seeks to outrank others in some line of endeavor?

11. Do you regard reading, writing, and arithmetic of greater or lesser importance than they were fifty years ago? Are they likely to become more or less important? Give as many illustrations as possible to support your answer.

12. How much reading should be done by a pupil of normal intelligence during his first year in school? How much should he accomplish in numbers, writing, language, and music?

13. What particular advantage is it to a pupil to be taught to read as early as possible?

14. If a pupil could remain in school only six years, give the lines of work which, in your judgment, would be best for him to study. What difference would you make in his work if he could be in school eight years? Twelve years? Sixteen years?

15. What portion of the pupils in your community finish the elementary school? The high school? College?

16. Why is it so important that as rapid progress as possible be made in the first years of the school life of the pupil?

## CHAPTER II

### THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

**Importance of a Good Beginning.** A good start wins many victories which might otherwise be forever lost. There is no other enterprise in which a good beginning is more essential than it is in beginning the work of a school year. The impression the teacher makes the first day determines in a large measure the attitude his pupils and the community will assume toward him in his conduct of the school. If it is apparent from the beginning that he is master of the situation in every detail, he will be looked to as the leader without further question, but if he is uncertain of his course, many will soon arise who will question his leadership.

**Preparation for the First Day.** No work of importance can be done without ample preparation. It is impossible for the teacher to start the work of a school year without the most careful preparation. No teacher, even with many years of experience, can take charge of a new school and organize it properly for work the first day unless he has made careful preparation for the opening day, long before that day arrives. His preparatory work should be so well done before the first day that the first day will move along with the precision of a school in operation several weeks.

**Sources of Information.** If the teacher launches his school properly on the first day, it is evident that he must be in possession of a large number of facts relating to the school before he begins his work. If the teacher is a stranger to the school, he must begin early enough to provide for all possible difficulties which may arise. If he is engaged to teach an ungraded school, or if he is employed to assume the management of a system of schools, much more time will be required to perfect his plans for the first day. He must consult the various sources of information available to supply him with all the necessary facts concerning the school. He should get possession of the records of the school, and study them carefully to familiarize himself regarding the number of classes, ages of pupils, and other details which are indispensable to the opening. If the records have been kept properly, and if the details of classification have been recorded, he will need very little more information about the school in order to organize it properly. It is unfortunate, however, that the records of many schools are very inadequate, and they may prove entirely worthless to the subsequent teacher. This may happen either because the former teacher was negligent in his records, or it may result from the resignation of the teacher who had planned to return to the school the subsequent year and who was thoroughly familiar with the details necessary for the organization. Every teacher, it may be said, should leave in his school at the close of each year a record which is sufficiently

## 16 PRACTICAL PROBLEMS OF THE SCHOOL

complete to enable a stranger to assume the duties of the school the next year.

If the records of the school are inadequate, the teacher should visit the former teacher, and obtain from him a full knowledge of the school. If a personal visit is impossible, he should seek the desired information by correspondence. Some knowledge may be gained by consulting the county superintendent or other supervisory officer, but it is not likely that the knowledge thus gained will be sufficiently specific to aid the teacher greatly in organizing the school. The teacher should not trust to the pupils of the school on the opening day to guide him in the formation of his plans. The information thus gained is usually too meagre and too uncertain to be of value, and, besides, the teacher cannot afford to wait until the first day for this knowledge of the school. Any teacher who begins early and who persists in his efforts to become familiar with his school usually obtains concerning the school all the facts which he needs.

**The Course of Study.** Every school should have a definite course of study. Familiarity with this course is a prime necessity for the teacher. He must have the details of the course in mind before he attempts to arrange his plans for the first day. The course of study should be sought from the former teacher or from those higher in authority. If the school follows a state or a county course, a copy of it is easily obtained. It will be necessary for the teacher to make a careful study of the course in order to become thoroughly

familiar with its general plan of organization. Serious mistakes in organization are inevitable unless the teacher knows the course of study as it is planned for the work of his grade or grades.

**Classification of Pupils.** With a study of the school records, and familiarity with the course of study the teacher should be able to classify his pupils for their work. He should know the classes which are to be taught and the names of the pupils who belong in each class. He should know at what point each class should begin the work of the year. A careful record should be made of the classes so that the details are easily accessible for use the first day of school. If the teacher is employed to teach an ungraded school, he may have many classes. Suppose he finds that he must teach all grades from the first to the eighth. The first grade will be, for the most part, beginners. He can estimate the number approximately from the average size of the other classes. He may then begin his organization of the second grade. The pupils who were in the first grade the previous year and who have been promoted will constitute the second grade unless some have been retained in the grade from the previous year. In this case the names of these pupils should be added to the list of second grade pupils. All of these pupils should, under ordinary circumstances, recite together in all second-grade classes. If the second-grade work in the course of study requires reading, numbers, writing, drawing, and story work, these pupils should be recorded for

these classes. The work of the third grade, and all other grades should be arranged in a similar manner. When the members of all the grades and classes have been determined, the teacher may determine the number of classes which must be provided for on his program. There is no reason why this plan of organization should not be a safe one for the teacher who teaches in a graded school, where only one or two grades are taught. The number of pupils will indicate how many divisions of the classes are advisable, and the grading and former standing of the pupils will indicate the pupils who should be placed in the same class

**Pronunciation of Names.** The teacher who goes into a new community should not make himself conspicuous by mispronouncing the names of his pupils. There are usually some peculiar names in every locality, which are new to the teacher. It is very distracting in the school for the teacher to blunder repeatedly in calling the names of the pupils. Nothing makes it more evident that he is, indeed, the "new teacher" than blundering over names. There is no excuse for this uncertainty; the teacher can know definitely regarding them by asking the former teacher if he confers with him; if he does not have this opportunity, he may remove all doubts by consulting an older pupil before the opening of school. When the pronunciation of the name has been determined, the teacher should mark it diacritically and exercise care in using the name until it is familiar to him. One



feels a certain sense of acquaintance with another when he hears the other call him by his name, but it requires a long time to feel acquainted with one who blunders in his use of your name. This matter is so important that it deserves to be listed as one of the points of preparation for the first day of school.

**The Program.** After the teacher has determined the number of classes and the subjects which must be taught in his school, he is in possession of all the necessary facts to arrange his program. This is the most important part of the work of organization. The teacher must determine at the outset what classes are to recite every day, what classes are to recite less often and when, and what time can be allowed each class. In most schools it is impossible to hear each class every day. Drawing, music, writing, and hand-work may be arranged for two or three periods each week. The teacher should have a definite plan, however, for each class; he should never have classes which are "worked in when time permits." All should have their place on the program, and they should be heard at their allotted time. Some of the work of the school is so important that it is necessary to provide for it every day; some work should be given more than one period each day. The reading work in the first and second grades should be given at least two periods a day. If pupils in the third grade are very weak in reading, they should be given two periods each day; in most instances, however, one period a day is sufficient. In all other grades one period a day

## 20 PRACTICAL PROBLEMS OF THE SCHOOL

is sufficient for the regular work of the elementary school.

Under the most extreme conditions the teacher should reduce his classes so that it will not be necessary to give less than ten minutes to any recitation. It would be better to give at least fifteen minutes to each recitation in the grades, and a longer time if possible. Fifteen to twenty minutes makes a good period for small classes from the first to the fourth grade; twenty to thirty minutes provides a good period for pupils from the fifth through the eighth grade, but with small classes a teacher may do reasonably good work with less time.

In arranging the program it is well, if possible, to arrange the classes so that formal studies come in the morning, and are alternated with content studies. Under complicated conditions, however, the teacher must ignore this condition very largely.

In larger systems of schools it is not feasible to permit grade teachers to make out their own programs. These are made out by the principal or superintendent. Special teachers who work in different schools must be provided for, and special lines of work are arranged from year to year to suit the individuality of the superintendent. In all cases, whether the teacher makes out his own program or has it made out for him, he should follow it closely. The most economical way to do a large amount of school work, and the condition under which it is most likely to be done at all, is to have a well-organized program, which the teacher

follows faithfully. It is a rare thing to find a teacher who is careless about following a schedule of classes and who is not also neglecting seriously some line or lines of work. The tendency in such instances is to give too much time to a few lines of work which stand in particular favor with the teacher.

**The Rules and Regulations.** Every school has rules and regulations which are peculiar to it. The teacher should get a copy of these regulations and become familiar with them before the first day of school. Unless he does this, he is likely to violate some important requirement of the board unintentionally. These regulations usually define the duties of pupils and the teacher, place certain limits upon the entry of pupils, regulate the length of the school day, and many other details with which the teacher should be familiar. It is unfortunate, however, that in many systems of schools many sections of the printed regulations are not and never have been enforced. An attempt to enforce them to the letter would meet with violent opposition. It might be well for the teacher to find out from the former teacher, or from those in authority, how many of the so-called "regulations" are not enforced. The teacher who has taught several years has little difficulty in determining what regulations are not commonly enforced. But there are always some regulations which should never be violated by the teacher without permission from the board of education or those higher in authority than the teacher to whom certain discretionary powers are given.

## 22 PRACTICAL PROBLEMS OF THE SCHOOL

**Supplies for the Pupils.** The teacher in the ungraded school and those in charge of the school system must see that supplies are available for the pupils before the opening of school. These supplies should be ordered two or three weeks before the opening of school in order to avoid inconvenience on account of delays in shipment, which are incident to the beginning of the school year. Almost every school has established methods of securing its supplies. The teacher needs to become familiar with the prevailing method and to conform to it. If the school furnishes some or all of the supplies, the teacher should see that they are secured and delivered at the school before the first day. It is difficult to carry on the work of the school even for a few days without adequate supplies.

**The School Plant.** The teacher may be careful to provide for all the conditions suggested above, and yet fail to secure a desirable opening. The school plant is an important part of the school equipment, and it must be in good condition if it is to serve its highest function. The condition of the plant can be determined only by a visit to the school. If the teacher is the one highest in authority in the school, he should visit the buildings and grounds three or four weeks before the opening of school to see if repairs are necessary to place the plant in proper condition for the work of the year. The floor should be thoroughly cleaned, the walls and ceiling put in an attractive condition, the window panes replaced if any are broken, the

curtains made attractive, the desks, maps, and the whole interior of the room put in order. All of these details have their influence on the school from the first day, and a glance at the conditions found in a schoolroom serves as a fair index of the teacher. The teacher should not confine his efforts to the interior of the school; he should examine the grounds to see if they are suitable for the opening day. The grass often needs to be mown, and the grounds cleared of the rubbish which has accumulated during the vacation. The fence may have become unsightly; if so, it needs to be put in order. If the building is a frame one, it may need painting. If the outhouse is located outside, it may be seriously in need of repairs. If these things are needed, and if the teacher can induce the board of directors to visit the premises with him before the opening of school, they will be likely to attend to all the apparent needs. It is much easier to have these steps taken during the vacation than it is to induce members of the board to do the work after school begins. By the time the first day arrives everything about the school should have a neat and orderly appearance. Pupils who are greeted on the first day with an outlook as here suggested will unconsciously enter upon their duties in the school with a wholesome and business-like spirit. These surroundings will serve as an excellent stimulus throughout the entire year.

The influence upon the lives and conduct of children produced by well-ordered and neatly kept environ-

ment cannot be overestimated. Pupils have a strong disposition to destroy and deface unsightly objects. They will knock down a tottering fence, tear a loose board from the building, cut initials and holes in a disfigured desk, misuse a tattered book, and otherwise mistreat things that are on the decline. On the other hand, children have a higher respect for order and beauty than is often supposed. A few years ago a teacher visited a school before the opening day. He found the desks in the school in very bad condition. He complained to the board of education about the condition of the desks; they were carved with letters and pictures which rendered them unattractive, besides almost unfitting them for service. He asked the board if something could not be done to improve the desks. The board replied, "It's no use to go to the trouble to put these desks in condition; they will be no better at the end of the year. We have in this school the worst boys found anywhere." They were assured by the teacher that, if the desks were put in good condition, he would see that they were kept in as good repair. All the desks were dressed and refinished in accordance with the request of the teacher. The tendency to carve the desks disappeared almost entirely; during the year there was only one case of defacement. The pupil was required to scrape his desk so as to remove all traces of the damage; he was then shown how to fill and varnish the desk and place it in as good condition as it was before the damage was done.

**Arranging Details.** A few days before the school begins the teacher should go to his school and make all necessary arrangements for the specific work of the first day. The nature of the work to be done will depend upon the character of the school he is employed to teach. In an ungraded school the teacher must make provision for several grades. He should place on the board all work which he desires to use the first day. He should have his program written in a conspicuous place so that all pupils may see the order of the day without questions. He should see that the unused portion of the board is clean, that crayon is at hand, that pencils and paper are ready for quick distribution in case it is necessary to provide work for pupils unsupplied with required materials. The teacher should have sufficient work planned for every class that he may keep every pupil occupied from the beginning to the close of the first day, even if every child comes to school the first day without a single book or pencil. Nothing should be left for the first day but the unlocking of the door. There will be duties the first day which will arise unforeseen sufficient to occupy the teacher's time.

**The First Morning.** The teacher should make it a point to be at school early the first morning, although he may have arranged every detail in advance. He should be at his desk an hour before the time of opening school. Some of the pupils will arrive early and others later. He can arrange temporary seats for them as they arrive. Some new pupils will be among

the arrivals—pupils from other schools, besides beginning pupils in the first grade. Pupils from other schools should be placed, at least temporarily, in the grade indicated by their cards, if they possess promotion cards. Pupils who do not bring with them evidence of their standing in the school formerly attended should be examined orally after school hours. It is not advisable to attempt to grade such pupils while school is in session. A written test will be found unsatisfactory in most cases as a means of determining the proper grade for outside pupils. During the vacation they have forgotten much, and the new conditions, involving a new school and a strange teacher, would very likely yield results which would be very misleading. A better way to determine their classification is to require them to work under the direction of the teacher. The age of a pupil and the number of years he has been in school will enable the teacher to make a reasonable guess as to the grade in which he belongs. A few other questions to determine what subjects he has studied and the character of the books used will supply additional information. When the teacher has sufficient evidence to estimate the probable grade of a pupil, he should then test his judgment by requiring the pupil to perform some work of the grade decided upon. The character of the pupil's reading may be relied upon for a pupil below the fourth grade to determine his grade, but it is well to test the arithmetic of the grade in addition. If these two branches show suf-



ficiently well to enable the pupil to do the work of the grade, it will not be necessary in most cases to make further tests. With pupils above the fourth grade the character of the work they are able to do in arithmetic is a fairly reliable standard upon which to judge their grade.

School should be called on the opening day at the appointed time for beginning. The teacher should not vary from the time a minute. The teacher may cultivate the habit of promptness in his pupils more by the manner in which he conducts the school than any amount of sermonizing on punctuality.

If the teacher has made a careful study of his school, as suggested, taking the roll will be a simple matter; all that is necessary is to call the names on his list and check those who are absent. If there are others present, their names may then be taken.

The pupils in the several classes should now be designated, and their work assigned. The nature of the work to be done the first day should be such as to require few books, if there is a likelihood of pupils being unsupplied. The teacher who has made careful preparation of all details should be able to start his classes at once in the order provided on his program. The direction for the movement of classes should be given when the classes are called; the plan followed should be the one which is to be used through the year. It is well to insist from the start upon strict compliance with all directions.

**Beginning Pupils.** If the teacher must decide upon the eligibility of beginning pupils, he should look well to the age of each child. In the rural communities many pupils are entered before the legal age. It is usually a mistake to permit pupils to enter school, with the intention of doing first-grade work, when they are five years of age. Many of these pupils make slow progress because of immaturity, and often must repeat the work the next year. Parents are frequently careless about the attendance of under-age pupils; this tends to augment the unusual difficulty. A difference of one year in the age of a beginner makes a vast difference in his rate of progress in school.

**Putting Pupils Back.** The teacher should avoid hasty judgments as to a change in the grading of pupils by the former teacher. He should not begin his first day by demoting pupils; he should not do this the first week or the first month in most instances. Until the teacher and pupils understand each other, it is impossible to form a correct judgment. A little review and a little readjustment may work wonders in the ability of some pupils. Some pupils may show very little ability to do the work of a grade at the beginning of the year, but after a few weeks do very acceptable work. It may be that some pupils belong to that group of slow learners who get only a superficial amount at best. It may be that these pupils have already repeated the work of the previous year, and to put them back would be a gross injustice to them unless it has been found, by a trial of several weeks,

impossible for them to do profitable work in the grade. The inexperienced teacher is very likely to conclude at once that some of the pupils are "graded too high." This is usually the first indication that the teacher has met the limit of his skill; it is the first proof that he cannot solve offhand the problems of the school so readily as he had judged before beginning his work. It shows the true relation between the "supply and demand" of the teacher's skill. From this day on he will find ample scope for his professional ingenuity to keep down the conviction that pupils are graded too high. The teacher is likely to overestimate his own skill and to place too much confidence in the infallibility of his methods of procedure. Pupils are capable of doing very difficult work in almost any subject with skillful direction. Let the teacher strive earnestly to make his skill a match for his pupil's lack of ability before he tries the radical cure of the difficulty by resorting to demotion.

#### QUESTIONS

1. Why is the first day of school so important? What general preparation should the teacher make for the first day?
2. What sources should the teacher consult for information about a school whose management he is to assume? How long before the first day should he begin to prepare for the opening?
3. Explain how the teacher may determine the classification of the pupils in his school before the first day. What disposition should be made of pupils entering from other schools, without report cards? What would be the danger in basing their classification on written examination?

## 30 PRACTICAL PROBLEMS OF THE SCHOOL

4. Explain in detail how a teacher may arrange a complete program before the opening of school. What are the difficulties encountered in attempting to arrange the program after the first day?

5. State the number of periods per week that should be given to the subjects commonly found on the program. What per cent of the school day should be given to each subject?

6. Give three or four factors that should be considered in arranging the several studies on the program.

7. What attention should be given to the school building and grounds before the opening of schools? Explain how proper attention to these matters may contribute greatly to the success of the year.

8. Explain what is commonly accepted as a proper standard of lighting for a school. Does your school meet this standard? If you know the height of a pupil, how may you determine the height of the seat necessary to seat him comfortably?

9. Most school rooms are ventilated by some form of convection air currents. Explain what this means and show how this operates in your school. What provision has your school for regulating these currents?

10. What is meant by the "psychology of suggestion"? Explain how this applies to the conduct of pupils toward defaced desks and other objects about the schools. How may pupils be led to keep the school furnishings in good condition? What argument would you present to a school board to influence the members to put the school plant in good repair?

11. What arrangements should the teacher make at the school before the first day? What materials should he have on hand?

12. Why should a teacher be at his school unusually early the first day?

13. What is the danger of ignoring the classification of the former teacher, and putting the pupils back because they show weakness in their work? How long should a pupil be given to

show his fitness to do the work of the grade to which he has been promoted?

14. What special caution should be exercised by the inexperienced teacher in making changes in classifications?

## CHAPTER III

### POINT OF VIEW IN DISCIPLINE

**Importance of Good Discipline.** The question of discipline is as old as the school, yet it is the vital question; superintendents and boards of education hesitate to employ teachers whose records as disciplinarians are poor. It is generally admitted that without good control very few of the school virtues can be realized, regardless of the scholarship, professional skill, and other attributes the teacher may possess. School authorities may tolerate poor instruction for a long time and be ignorant of it, but they rarely endure weak discipline in a teacher, because it is easily known to all.

One who visits many schools will soon be convinced that control is at the foundation of effective school-teaching. The question of method of control may have some importance, but the imperative thing is to secure it by one method or another. Loose control results in inferior work, because strict application is impossible under this condition, and without strict application and undivided attention to duty a low grade of work is inevitable. A teacher who has succeeded in securing close application to school tasks usually accomplishes a fair degree of work in

spite of poor methods, but the opposite condition is seldom found.

In a certain school the principal of the building had twenty-five eighth-grade pupils in her room. Her control was weak as was evidenced by continuous humming and communication. Note-writing was common and the movement of the pupils from one part of the room to another was permitted without any apparent restriction. The pupils were always poorly prepared on their lessons and manifested little interest in their work. They had failed to be impressed with the fact that school work is important and serious business. Just across the hall from this teacher was a teacher who had forty-five pupils in her room; she had seventh- and eighth-grade pupils. These pupils, of course, were very much the same in personal characteristics as the pupils in the first room; they were from the same families, many of them, or they were close friends and associates of them. Their whole attitude, however, toward their school work was radically different. There was not a word of communication in any form at any time during the session; they applied themselves continuously and vigorously to their tasks. Every question from the teacher was followed with eagerness; the pupils were well prepared for the work when the recitation was called, and every moment was utilized to the best advantage. There was no evident difference in the technical skill of the two teachers; the one seemed to have as much native ability as the other, but the

## 34 PRACTICAL PROBLEMS OF THE SCHOOL

difference in their schools resulted from a difference in the views they held regarding control.

**Ability to Control Acquired.** Teachers differ in native ability to control, but very few are strong in it without mastering to some extent by careful study the details involved in it. There is no part of the work of the school which we are willing to have the teacher to attempt without systematic study under an experienced teacher. In the matter of discipline, however, the teacher has received very little instruction; he has been set adrift to find his own course. Discipline has been regarded too long as an incidental thing. The point insisted upon here is that the teacher must make as definite preparation to succeed in discipline as he must make to teach arithmetic or any other study successfully. One may be thoroughly versed in the principles of teaching and distinguished for his breadth of scholarship, but be grossly ignorant of the simplest details necessary to control a school.

Every teacher should have a well-organized plan of control before entering upon his duties. He should be familiar with a large number of regulations, devices, and practices generally accepted as necessary to strong control. Without something definite in the way of plan of procedure, the teacher is likely to adopt some new scheme which requires a teacher of exceptional ability to operate it, or let the school drift along without maintaining even a fair standard of discipline. Novel schemes of control are unsafe for the inexperienced teacher. Almost any plan of control may be



highly successful with certain teachers or in certain schools. The safe course for the majority of teachers is to follow conventional methods until they can judge more fully concerning their own powers in this regard.

**Ignoring the Question.** There are a great many shades of opinion respecting methods of discipline. Certain types of teachers try to escape the problem of discipline by regarding it lightly or ignoring it entirely. They endeavor to convince themselves that good discipline is unnecessary, impossible, or undesirable. They attempt to justify the low standard of discipline in their schools by saying, "Children will be children." "I like mischievous children," and certain other stock expressions. They may partially admit that good discipline is desirable but attempt to excuse themselves on the plea of "lax parental control," "the weakness of the former teacher," or some other false claim. All these excuses are strong evidence of weakness in the teacher. They are akin to the defense made by incompetent public officials for their failure to enforce the law. They claim "Vice is necessary," "People will not support them," and so on.

**Hiding behind Defenses.** There is a class of weak disciplinarians who attempt to conceal themselves behind high-sounding and all-inclusive phrases. They frankly admit that their discipline is not strong. They insist that they could make it perfect if they chose to do so, but it would not afford that fine opportunity for "self-expression" which always exists in the type of school they conduct. This type of spineless

schoolmaster is easily recognized by his lavish and eloquent use of such large terms as "personal freedom," "training for a democracy," "schooling for citizenship," "social efficiency," and "control from within." He decries strict discipline with the harshest terms at his command. He uses freely in his denunciation such terms as "lockstep," "despotism," "czar," and "school a prison." These arguments lose their significance in the presence of facts. It is almost invariably true that the schools which maintain a strong discipline have none of the attributes attributed to them, while, at the same time, they have most of those desirable qualities which are supposed to exist in the other type of schools; and, on the other hand, the advocates of great freedom almost universally fail to develop those results which they give as a reason for their type of discipline.

If discipline were made an end in itself, and were it carried to the greatest extreme imagined by its opponents, all the arguments offered against it would be vital; but experience proves abundantly that the danger point is not in this direction; it is almost always in the other direction. Very few teachers wish or strive for better discipline than is necessary to carry on the work of the school without loss of time and energy of the pupils. This standard should be attained in every school.

It is possible to carry any good to an extreme where it becomes either an absurdity or an evil. Praying, for example, is a good thing, but no sane man

would think of living on his knees twenty-four hours each day. It is an admirable recreation to sit in a rocking chair, but suppose one should sit in a rocking chair all the time, or even twelve hours each day! It is a good thing to bathe, to take exercise, to eat good food, to "swat the fly," and to do many other things, but they must be done in accordance with certain limitations.

The usual arguments, therefore, presented as excuses for lax control are not well founded. They are the arguments of the unthinking, the misguided, and the weakling. They are the same characteristic arguments used by parents who lack sufficient wisdom and backbone to control their children, and who let them run the streets at night and grow pale and hollow-eyed by cigarettes supplemented by other dissipations. It is this type of parent who occasionally waits upon the teacher who insists upon proper conduct from their misguided children.

**"Adolescence" and Other Excuses.** Some teachers are too resourceful in their discovery of causes and excuses for disorder in their schools. (No attempt is made here to cast discredit upon a careful study of all the elements that influence the conduct of pupils; these should be given full credit for the part they play, but no more.) It is very easy to discover some supposed reason for every violation of school requirements, and excuse the offender. Some teachers try to explain everything on the plea of adolescence, nervousness, or some other physical abnormality. It

is rather a significant phenomenon that certain types of teachers always have an oversupply of "adolescents"; the appearance of the "phenomenon" is not manifested with the preceding teacher nor with the following one. If the teacher is transferred to another grade, high or low, the same characteristic acts of misconduct result from "adolescence," "nervousness," etc. The teacher may have only one class of the freshmen, sophomores, juniors, or seniors, while the other classes are taught by other teachers, but the same supply of the abnormal commodity is maintained in the classes of the teacher in question, and in her classes only. Some of the symptoms do not seem to be confined to children of particular age limits, but they include children of all ages, where certain types of teachers are in control.

A teacher who has not met ordinary requirements himself for maintaining proper conduct in school is not warranted in seeking excuses elsewhere. A teacher who through his own ignorance or neglect permits persistent disorder in a lower grade is training an incorrigible for an upper-grade teacher; the upper-grade teacher who permits such conduct is shifting the problem to the high school teacher; and the high school teacher who does not meet the issue is training a law-breaker for society; and all are contributing to the inefficiency of the pupil when he leaves school.

**Theory vs. Reality in Discipline.** There is a vast difference between imaginary and real results following certain systems of discipline. Some months since the

author visited the school of a teacher who was a very strong and eloquent advocate of great freedom on the part of the child—what he really meant was license. The conditions are given here conservatively that they may cause the reader to take with considerable allowance much he may hear claimed for certain novel schemes for school management. The first thing that impressed one in visiting the school was the time required to call the school to order. The principal in charge—the real advocate himself—sounded the call bell; no person in the room seemed to hear the bell, at least no move was made on the part of the pupils to take seats. The bell was sounded again and again, but the pupils continued to talk without making any attempt to take their seats. The teacher picked up an eighteen-inch ruler and began to pound on the table, at the same time reinforcing his efforts by calling and motioning those nearest him to be seated. At the end of just six minutes by the clock the pupils were in their seats ready for work. The climax of absurdity was reached when the teacher then proceeded to tell the pupils in a complimentary way “how readily they took their seats as soon as they heard the bell!” “You are so interested,” said he, “that you do not hear the call to order; now I like to see you enjoy yourselves, but listen for the signal.” At the beginning of each session the same process was repeated with the same loss of time. The school was called to order four times each day, thus, twenty-four minutes were consumed each day where less than four minutes

could have done the work more effectively from every point of view. Dismissals were no less conspicuous; when the pupils passed into the assembly room after the last class before an intermission, all was anxiety for the closing signal. Some of the pupils were leaning far out into the aisle, with one foot advanced in the direction of the door and the other braced for a vigorous push; the right hand was firmly gripped on the top of the desk and the left sustaining the weight of the body from the seat; all was in readiness to spring toward the door at the mere suggestion of the signal for dismissal. When the signal was given, there was a grand rush for the door with all the "courtesy" incident to a performance of this character. The pupils ran into the hall, through the hall down the stairways into the hall below, and out of the building, terminating the exit with a whoop.

The study hall of this school was one continuous round of communication; missile-throwing was the rule; the walls of the room bore evidences of encounters with apple cores and other refuse; the ceiling had clinging to it no less than a hundred paper wads; the floor at the close of school was strewn with paper, beans, corn, and shot. It is unnecessary to go further into this situation; it is needless to say that good recitations were the extreme exception, and failure was common, not only daily, but monthly. The worst feature of all was the fact that when these pupils were questioned in their liberties, they invariably "gave the teacher a piece of their mind." Perhaps

this was a high quality of "training for citizenship."

The office of the principal was always crowded with offending pupils. It was very evident that more effort was spent in the school to keep the conduct of the pupils within these loose bounds than would have been necessary to maintain a good standard of discipline. So far as interfering with the will of the pupils is concerned, more of it was done in this school than would be the case in a well-organized school.

Contrast, if you will, the school described above, with a school managed by a principal with a different view of discipline. This principal had six hundred pupils in his school—nearly double the number in the first school. When the pupils were called to order, all communication, both audible and inaudible, ceased at the first tap of the bell. Within thirty seconds all the pupils were in their seats ready to pass to their classes. The study hall was quiet, and all the pupils devoted the study time to the preparation of the assigned lessons. The recitation work showed familiarity with the work; failures were the exception. The school was dismissed by rows in an orderly manner, and all the pupils marched in an orderly manner through the halls and to the exits. No pupils were in the office of the principal for discipline, and only occasionally was it necessary to report pupils for disorder. Measured by the standards of training for citizenship, personal freedom, self-control, social efficiency, scholarship, or other desirable standards, the latter school is greatly superior to the former.

Discipline is largely a question of conservation of energy. If the energy of the school goes into play, it cannot be used for work; brain cells which are consumed in devising a trick to play on a schoolmate cannot be utilized in the solution of a problem. Such a school reminds one of an old rickety vehicle going along the street. A school which is well managed is comparable to a frictionless piece of machinery. The one has freedom of a different character from the other; each will do work after its manner. But energy is limited; time is limited; and life is limited.

**Three General Conclusions.** It is almost universally true that (a) the teacher has the kind of discipline he will tolerate; (b) it is easier to have strong discipline than medium discipline; and (c) good order contributes to good order and weak discipline is conducive to disorder. On the first point it may be said that pupils are inclined to take liberties to the point of restraint; they are restrained about as easily at one point as another. Some teachers are too cowardly to have strong discipline; they are afraid they will not be admired by the pupils and patrons. No better course could be pursued for disfavor than such a policy; it is very seldom that a teacher who is thus yielding in his control is greatly admired or respected by either pupils or patrons.

If the limits of liberties in a school are not well defined, pupils constantly exceed the limit; the invasion of the outside becomes more frequent and more extensive; the teacher must then have days of readjust-



ment. The process of invasion begins again after a few days and continues until the next day of "readjustment" is due. This process continues throughout the year and the result is poor discipline. Where the teacher has his school well organized, and his plans include a strict application to the work of the school, his quality of discipline is quite uniform; pupils soon become established in the habit of industry and give very little thought to other forms of activity. The teacher becomes unconscious of the existence of any requirements respecting the conduct of the pupils.

The teacher who has strong discipline has very little difficulty with new pupils who enter from time to time, although they may have come from schools of lax control. The most difficult place for a pupil to practice disorder is in a school of orderly pupils. His attempts are frowned upon by his companions, and this is a greater reproof than could be given by the teacher; besides, it is difficult to play a game of any sort alone. But, the reverse condition is true of a school with lax discipline; pupils who come in from other schools soon enter into the same spirit of idleness and disobedience. The most difficult place for a pupil to be orderly is in a disorderly school.

The teacher should understand that habit is a large element in the conduct of pupils. Habits of good conduct and habits of disobedience may be formed with equal ease.

**Mistaken Notions Concerning Discipline.** The question of discipline is not a one-element matter.

Some teachers flounder in their management because they try to solve the question by means of a single detail of adjustment. The question of control is related to a great number of things; all of these contribute their part to the character of discipline of the school. Some teachers err by supposing that discipline is separate and apart from other considerations; others err by supposing that it must be maintained incidentally; both views are incomplete. Discipline must be treated directly and indirectly; either without the other is inadequate. There is no royal road, no short cut, no magical way to discipline. It includes, in a measure, the school in its entirety.

**Not Just a Question of Interest.** Discipline is not "just a question of interest," as it is frequently regarded. The interest of pupils in school tasks has much to do with their conduct, but it is impossible to approach the question of control successfully from the direction of interest; conduct may be such that interest is impossible. Where there is good discipline there is usually interest, but the one is not the only cause of the other; interest and control are mutually cause and effect.

**Not a Question of Keeping Pupils Busy.** Discipline is not a mere matter of keeping pupils provided with plenty of work to do; the pupil who causes the teacher the most anxiety as to his conduct is usually the pupil who is the most amply provided with work; he is likely to begin wasting his time in mischief before he has begun his assigned tasks. This element

in the problem is only contributory, as mentioned in the case of interest. The teacher, however, who has provided sufficient and suitable work has removed a strong incentive for misconduct. It is difficult to keep pupils, unprovided with definite work, to any standard of discipline. The teacher should make ample provision for work for every moment of the session. There should be no idle moments waiting for the signal for dismissal, for the appearance of special teachers to give their work, or for the recitation to be called. There should be no long delays waiting for the distribution of supplies; and there should be no idle moments while the teacher is attending to the needs of individual pupils, or listening to the requests of other teachers or other persons.

**Not Identical with Instructional Skill of Teacher.** The skill of the teacher in instruction has frequently been regarded as entirely responsible for the conduct of pupils in the room and the class. But poor teachers are frequently good in discipline as the term is commonly understood; it is certainly true that teachers do not vary in power to discipline in direct proportion to their skill in instruction. It is also true that the same teacher frequently becomes strong in discipline without any perceptible change in skill of instruction. We must, then, consider technical instruction as another contributory element in discipline, but not the determinative element.

**Not a Question of Sanitation.** Poor sanitary regulations have often been assigned as the cause of lax

control, but this, like the reasons considered above, is only a partial cause; the teacher who is strong in discipline may be quite indifferent to proper sanitary precautions, and the weak teacher may be exceptionally sensitive as regards such measures.

**Not a Question of the Weather.** The condition of the weather is given by the teacher sometimes as an excuse for the restlessness of the pupils; pupils on bad days are supposed to show a greater inclination toward misconduct. There is no doubt that this condition is reflected in a small degree in the school, but the teacher who has mastered the many other details involved in discipline is quite unconscious of changes of weather conditions.

**Not the Former Teacher's Fault.** When a teacher assumes control of a school, he should very soon assume responsibility for the discipline as it exists in his room. It is easy to attribute one's own failures to others, but experience shows that pupils respond quickly to the ideals and requirements of the new teacher. There is no way by which pupils may be so disciplined that they will continue to meet requirements in conduct without proper strength in control of subsequent teachers.

**Parental Co-operation.** Discipline would be easy if all parents exercised the proper control over their children, and if they always gave the teacher liberal support in the management of their children, but such ideal conditions seldom exist. The teacher is rarely given the co-operation of the parent in dealing with a

severe case of discipline, when it is most needed. In such cases the parent almost always takes the part of the child. Perhaps this is only natural for the parent. It is not argued here that all parents assume this attitude; it is not urged that a majority or any considerable number do so, but the point insisted upon as true is that the parent whose child gives the teacher the most trouble is very likely to assume this attitude. In some instances the parent may make a pretense at giving the teacher his support, but in reality he is in opposition to the teacher in his attempt to control his child. Such parents usually blame the teacher for whatever there may be remiss in the conduct of the child. The child is usually bad because his parents are bad, or because they have lost control of the child. In the latter instance their co-operation is worthless.

A certain boy was causing his teachers a great deal of trouble at school; he caused them more concern than all the other children of the school. The superintendent explained the matter to the president of the board of education, who had served on the board for many years. He said, "I am not surprised that the boy causes the teachers trouble. I was a member of a committee, when this boy's father was in school, that called upon the grandfather of this boy to complain about the conduct of this boy's father. The kind of co-operation we received was the most scathing abuse an unprincipled man could utter." So it is always in such cases. The teacher must, therefore, prepare to control such cases single-handed. It is very certain

that the teacher who approaches such parents only complicates his problem.

**General Co-operation Necessary for Strong Discipline.** All of the forces of the school should co-operate to secure the highest standard of discipline. A teacher may have the essential qualities for securing control, but fail because of the lack of support of those higher in authority. The room teacher must have the support of the principal and the superintendent, and they in turn must have the support of the board of education.

Superintendents often form wrong opinions regarding the ability of their teachers because of the difference in attitude which they encounter in dealing with the same pupils who give the room teachers trouble. This difference in attitude often results because the superintendent has greater authority, or it may be due to the possession of greater muscular power. Certain pupils have a wholesome respect for muscle even if it be possessed by one who is, in other respects, inferior in higher virtues. It is for this reason unsafe for the superintendent to assume that he possesses greater skill than a teacher who is struggling with problems of discipline until he has analyzed the situation carefully and has determined the real foundation for the difference in results.

**Division of the Subject.** For the sake of simplification in treatment the discussion of discipline will be treated in the following chapters under "Discipline of the Room," "Management of the Class," and "Man-

agement of the Playground.” We should understand, however, that the character of control in any one of the three is reflected in the other two. Under each of these discussions many specific points are given to assist the teacher in the proper organization of his school.

#### QUESTIONS

1. Why is good discipline so important in a school? How is it usually ranked among teachers of experience?

2. Show that the quality of discipline is largely dependent upon the attitude of the teacher.

3. What is meant by saying that, “Ability to control is acquired”? Show that a definite plan of control is essential to success. Why do unusual schemes often produce excellent results in control? Why are such schemes of doubtful value for the inexperienced teacher?

4. Give the usual excuses offered by teachers to explain the lax discipline in their schools.

5. What attributes are claimed by the advocates of great freedom? What is their criticism of schools that maintain strict discipline? From your own observation, state to what extent you consider their claims and criticisms just and unjust?

6. Discuss adolescence and physical abnormalities in their relation to the discipline of a school.

7. Discuss strong and weak discipline from the standpoint of economy of time, the formation of correct business habits, attitude toward authority, and growth in self-control.

8. Show that discipline is not a “one-element matter.” In what way is discipline related to the entire school? In what way is discipline independent of other considerations?

9. Show to what extent discipline is and is not (a) a question of interest, (b) a question of keeping pupils busy, (c) identical with instructional skill of the teacher, (d) a question of sanitation, (e) a question of the weather, and (f) the former teacher’s fault.

## 50 PRACTICAL PROBLEMS OF THE SCHOOL

10. Discuss the need of and the difficulties in securing parental co-operation in the control of pupils. How often during the year is a teacher likely to be compelled to call to his assistance the parent in discipline? What is the effect on the teacher's influence over his school of frequent resort to higher authority?

11. Explain the relation of the principal, superintendent, and board of education to the problem of discipline. Why does the principal often find a pupil easy to control while the room teacher finds the same pupil difficult to manage?



## CHAPTER IV

### DISCIPLINE IN THE ROOM

**THE** teacher should give proper consideration from the first to the organization of the school as a whole. Many of the problems of discipline are met by prevention rather than by specific treatment. Prevention may often be easy where correction is difficult.

**Govern without Show.** The power of the teacher is seldom displayed where strong control exists; the school seems to control itself automatically. Pupils are not influenced greatly by formal lectures regarding misconduct. The practice of discussing the misdeeds of a few pupils before the school as a whole is likely to result in positive harm rather than the prevention of similar conduct in other pupils. The teacher should counsel in private with offending pupils where there are but few involved. Extensive discussions, therefore, at the beginning of school to outline what is expected of pupils is useless. A few general statements are sufficient to make a beginning. The plans for organization, however, should be full and detailed.

**Seating of the Pupils.** The practice of allowing pupils to select their own seats at the opening of school is not conducive to good discipline. Very early in the year—the second day if possible—the teacher should arrange the seating of all the pupils of his room. This

## 52 PRACTICAL PROBLEMS OF THE SCHOOL

should be done with the utmost care. He should draw a plan of the schoolroom showing the position of every seat; he should then take a list of the names of the pupils and distribute them to the best advantage. He will find it desirable to separate certain pupils because of close friendship, in order to remove the strong incentive for communication.

Some pupils who are especially troublesome should be carefully placed so that they may be at the greatest disadvantage for misconduct. A corner seat is a good location for such pupils; if the teacher has more seats than pupils, it is a good plan to leave vacant the seats in the rear of and directly opposite troublesome pupils. This plan may be reinforced by placing pupils least likely to encourage the offender in his ways in the seats nearest. In the absence of extra seats the latter arrangement is often effective. It is a good general rule to seat all pupils just so far as possible in close proximity to those with whom they would have the least desire or reason to communicate. This plan requires the mixing of classes in the room. Even in the high school, it is a good plan to seat upper class pupils near lower class pupils; a great deal of disorder that disturbs the school begins where pupils attempt to confer relative to their work. After the pupils have been located, the teacher should make changes when conditions suggest the need of them.

**Leaving Seats without Permission.** Pupils should not be permitted to leave their seats during school hours except on permission from the teacher. A few

general permissions for the use of the dictionary and other references might be given without interference with the general order of the room, but the liberty to move from one seat to another is always productive of evil.

**Leaving the Room.** Pupils should be permitted to leave the room only under permission or definite regulation of the teacher. If the teacher grants the privilege without restriction, there is likely to be much misuse of the privilege. It is rarely possible, even in the high school, to grant this liberty without restriction. The teacher should keep a close watch on all permissions granted to pupils to leave the room. He should pay particular attention to the time consumed in each absence from the room. It is rarely necessary for a pupil to be absent from the room longer than five minutes; pupils who are not properly supervised in this respect are likely to consume from ten to thirty minutes in absence from the room. Pupils will often leave the school grounds, or will ask permission to leave the room in order to converse with persons outside of the school. The teacher should note carefully whether the same pupil asks each session to be excused from the room; if this is true, the case needs careful attention to determine whether or not the request is due to necessity. Some pupils, especially younger pupils, may need to be excused very frequently, and in some instances should not be delayed for an instant. The teacher should see that proper use of the toilets is made during the intermissions by pupils

who ask frequent permission to leave the room; this may reduce very materially the need for granting permissions during school hours.

Only in rare instances should the teacher permit more than one pupil of the same sex to leave the room at the same time; it indicates bad management to see two or three boys or girls from the same room out on permission at the same time.

It is a great mistake to forbid entirely the use of the toilets during school hours; the teacher should bear in mind that he has many pupils under his direction who vary in their physical vigor, and that the same individual varies from day to day in his bodily needs. To deprive one of the use of the toilet when there is extreme need is to endanger his health. It is equally unwise to punish pupils for asking permission to leave the room by requiring them to make up time for absence for this purpose. The thoughtful teacher will study individual needs sufficiently to reduce the practice to a point where the actual needs will be quite fully met.

**Use of the Waste Basket.** There should be stated intervals, usually at the close of the half-day sessions, when the waste basket is passed systematically along the aisles in order that the room may be kept tidy and all needless paper prevented from accumulating in the pupils' desks. Some teachers place the basket near the door and the pupils are permitted to drop their waste paper in the basket as they pass out. It is never a good arrangement to permit the pupils to leave their seats to drop paper in the basket when

they so desire. This evil in some schools is very pronounced; it results in an almost constant stream of pupils from their seats to the basket and back, with much confusion and waste of time.

**Only One Pupil to a Seat.** No little annoyance results in some schools by the practice of permitting two pupils to study together in the same seat. The reason for this is usually due to the failure of a few pupils to be supplied with books, or to the absence of lessons in the books they possess. This combination of pupils usually results in keeping both pupils from making proper preparation of the lesson; pupils cannot study together to advantage, even if they were disposed to spend all of their time on the lesson, which they rarely are. Pupils will often be found, where this practice is in vogue, requesting permission to study with a classmate when his own book contains the lesson. The pupil who supplies himself with books for his work should not be imposed upon by requesting him to share their use with other pupils. If pupils are without books, they should be supplied at public expense if they are unable to purchase them. If they are able to purchase them, but are indifferent, they should be allowed to study from the books of other pupils only when these books are not in use by their owners.

**Sharpening Pencils.** Borrowing pencils or borrowing knives to sharpen pencils is a needless waste of time in school, and it is a source of annoyance to the school. This evil usually results in having one or more pupils

at a time standing before the waste basket sharpening pencils. The teacher should not permit a pupil to borrow a knife or a pencil from a member of the room during the session. The teacher should have a supply of one or two dozen pencils to be used in emergencies. The pupil who breaks his pencil, or who is for other reasons in need of one, may be permitted to step to the teacher's desk, leave his name on a slip of paper, and take a pencil. He should return the pencil promptly at the close of the session.

**No Communication without Permission.** Unrestricted communication is the origin of a large amount of disorder in the schoolroom. Some teachers are afraid to forbid communication; they sanction some; this amount increases to more; the expansion continues until each pupil communicates every few minutes during school hours; then the teacher tries to reduce the evil, without effect. The practice leads to note-writing, cartooning, and other forms of amusement. The teacher will find it comparatively easy to deny the permission and prevent more than an occasional violation, much easier in fact than it is to regulate the amount. The great need of the pupil is power of continuous application to a given task; the best thought of a pupil on a topic is not likely to result the first three or four minutes of study; if he stops to communicate to one of his companions, he changes his current of thought from his task to other things so frequently that his study is of the most superficial character.

Communication has long been considered impossible of elimination in school: some say there never was a school where some communication did not exist; they offer this as a reason for their failure to pronounce against it. There was perhaps never a community in which theft and murder did not exist some time, yet we would not think of permitting just a little theft, and just a little murder to avoid making a law that might be broken.

There are many schools in which there is no visible disturbance from communication at any time school is in session; the teacher has a requirement which all pupils thoroughly understand; the teacher very seldom speaks to any pupil regarding communication because the line is definitely drawn and is strictly respected.

If a school has the habit of communicating, it is not easily broken, yet it is not impossible to do so. A faithful and systematic checking of pupils who engage in the practice, followed up by punishment of habitual offenders, will soon change the tendency into application to the work of the school.

A school may be transformed in a few weeks from concentrated study to wholesale communication by a teacher who is indifferent to communication in his room. One frequently sees a school of industrious and orderly pupils pass from a room at the close of the year to the next room, where the teacher is lax in control. The first month of school there is very little communication to be seen in the room; but the close observer will soon notice the evil of whispering gradu-

ally creeping in; at first it seems and is quite harmless, but day by day it grows until the time between study and communication is quite evenly divided. The pupils the first month followed the inertia of the preceding year. A pupil who was asked to explain the reason for the change from order to disorder stated the case accurately thus, "We do just a little at first; if nothing is said, we do just a little more next time, and a little more the next time, until we find out how much the teacher will let us do."

The teacher needs to be keenly sensitive to the conduct habits being formed in the school; the teacher who is perfectly unaffected by idleness of pupils and misconduct as it is exhibited before him repeatedly, lacks the most fundamental requirements for strength in discipline. The teacher should be so constructed that it is impossible for him to live in an atmosphere of disorder.

**Leaving the Room without Supervision.** The teacher may add greatly to the tendency to disorder by frequently leaving the room without any one in charge; it is very seldom that there are not gross violations of discipline in the absence of the teacher. The moral effects of these breaches of discipline are extremely bad; they breed contempt for the regulations of the teacher, and they create a strong desire to violate requirements in the presence of the teacher. It should rarely be necessary for the teacher to leave his room during a session; when such becomes necessary, he should if possible place some one in charge. The teacher who



finds the question of discipline something of a problem in his work should take every precaution to guard against contributing to the difficulties of the problem.

There are some teachers who are unusually strong in their control over their pupils; these teachers are able at times to leave their rooms for several minutes without the slightest manifestation of disorder; if there are serious breaches in discipline, they are usually promptly informed. Such teachers are by no means numerous, and the practice should not be indulged in by most teachers until they have demonstrated sufficiently that they should be ranked with this superior group.

**Influence of the Substitute.** The substitute teacher should be strong in control. It very often happens that incompetent persons are put in charge of the school when the regular teacher is called away from her duties. It is thought that any person, regardless of immaturity, scholarship, or lack of experience, is sufficient for a few days. Good habits of the pupils are broken in this brief interval, and the resulting evils continue for many days after the return of the regular teacher. It is economy from every point of view to dismiss a room in the absence of the regular teacher, unless a competent substitute may be had.

**Some Common but Bad Practices of Teachers.** Everything which diverts the attention of the school contributes to its disorder; this is just as true of the things the teacher does as it is of the things the pupils do. The teacher of necessity occupies a position at

one end of the room; this removes him from close proximity to many pupils. Pupils who raise their hands should never be permitted to call out their requests over the heads of the other pupils to the teacher; and the teacher should never call back answers or requests to individual pupils. The observer often sees practices similar to the following: A pupil located in the rear of the room or sitting in the midst of the school raises his hand; the teacher calls out, "Well, John, what is it?" "Can't pronounce this word." "Spell it." "P-h-e-n-o-m-e-n-o-n." "Phenomenon. Don't you know what a phenomenon is?" The teacher then proceeds to explain to the pupil at long range while the entire school suspends operations until the performance is over. The teacher should pass back quietly to the pupil's desk or have him in response to an inaudible signal come to him; all answers and questions between the teacher and the pupil should be in whispers or in a low tone of voice. In the former method of procedure the entire room receives a shock and agitation which is comparable to the effect produced by throwing a heavy stone into a placid pond. Continuous and quiet occupation of the pupils in study relieves the teacher of much care in discipline; this occupation is capable of formation under proper conditions, but the frequent interruption of attention in study makes this habit of study very difficult of formation.

The teacher should avoid all practices which tend to throw his school into confusion and thus break the

continuity of thought of the pupils. Many teachers do this unconsciously by making foolish remarks which convulse the school in laughter; sometimes the teacher accomplishes it by turning the answers of the pupils to absurdities or to ridicule, much to the embarrassment of the pupil. The pupils soon become accustomed to these amusing turns and keep their ears on the alert for them. They thus form the habit of study with a divided mental energy.

This evil sometimes takes the form of the "question box." At this time the teacher permits the pupils to drop foolish questions in a box to be read and answered later. These never serve any useful purpose, and their influence on the school is bad. They lower the dignity of the school, and they stimulate frivolity and insincere thought on the part of the pupils, which, with many pupils, is already abnormally developed.

**The Manner of the Teacher.** A school in a large measure is a reflection of the teacher. For this reason the teacher should cultivate a quiet manner in all things. "A quiet teacher makes a quiet school" is a true saying. The movements of the teacher about the room should be quiet; his handling of books, coal, erasers, maps, and other materials should be such as to produce little confusion. The same spirit should be cultivated in the pupils. A pupil who leaves the room should do so in a manner to escape the attention of the other pupils; it is likely to happen, unless the teacher gives it his attention, that a pupil will walk heavily from his seat to the door, open the door rudely, and close it

with a slam. The same process may be repeated on his return. A little attention to this matter will soon correct the difficulty. The teacher may properly ask the pupil to return to his seat and pass quietly over the floor; he should be asked to repeat the request until he can pass out without disturbance. A pupil who has particular trouble in reducing the noise incident to his leaving the room should be asked to remain at his seat and forego the privilege. This will be found to assist the offender greatly in the reduction of confusion the next time his request is granted to leave the room.

The same spirit should be manifested in all other movements of the pupils about the room. It should be required of all persons visiting the school. Persons who visit the school and who persist in conversation should be politely asked to desist, and in case of failure should be requested and even forced if necessary to leave the school. These considerations are large elements in building up a wholesome atmosphere in the school, and they should receive the most careful attention of the teacher.

**Preparation for the Day's Work.** All preparations for the work of the day should be made before school calls; it is too late after the bell rings and pupils are in their seats, to begin placing work on the board, distributing crayon and erasers, adjusting the shades and windows, poking the fire, and doing other things which could be done before the school is called. The teacher should be at the school building long enough before

school is called to have all details of the work of the day arranged, long enough before the pupils arrive that he may give them his full attention when it is needed.

The teacher should not attempt to prepare lessons, grade papers, or engage in other tasks which draw his attention from his school. His lessons for the day should be so well prepared that he can be largely free from his texts while conducting his recitations; this will enable him to supervise his room effectively at all times. The teacher should avoid turning his back to his school long at a time; this invites disorder from pupils who need careful direction to cultivate in them the habit of study.

**Providing Definite Work.** The pupils should be provided with definite tasks to perform; these tasks should be sufficient to require the full allotted time for study. The teacher should be sure the pupils know how to perform the assigned task without assistance from him or other pupils. All assigned lessons should be called for, and the pupils held strictly responsible for the proper preparation of them. Pupils who do not perform the required task should be required to make the preparation as requested outside of school, especially if the teacher has reason to believe the entire time for study was not faithfully applied to the task.

**Make the Pupils Comfortable.** There are many conditions about a schoolroom which affect the conduct of the pupils indirectly. These are largely under the control of the teacher. The teacher should see that

all of the pupils are seated in seats of proper height. It should be possible for every pupil to touch the floor with his feet while sitting in touch with the lower part of the back of his seat; if this is not possible, the seat should be changed or a sufficient support placed on the floor upon which the pupil may rest his feet. The desk should not be too high nor arranged too near the adjacent desk, nor placed in any position which requires the pupil to assume a cramped position.

The position of the pupils as regards the light should receive attention. No pupil should be placed in a schoolroom so as to face a light. It is very easy to injure the pupil's eyes permanently in this manner. The injury is done in so subtle a manner that the pupil himself may not be conscious of it.

The temperature of the schoolroom should always be a vital concern of the teacher. Every schoolroom should be equipped with a thermometer. The teacher should be absolutely certain that the thermometer registers correctly—cheap thermometers rarely register within five degrees of the correct temperature. The teacher should test his thermometer at least once each year. A good way to do this is to place the bulb of the thermometer in a mixture of ice and water and leave it for fifteen minutes; the thermometer, if correct, will register thirty-two degrees Fahrenheit. The room should be kept at seventy degrees as nearly as possible. The teacher should have regular times at which he examines the temperature of his room; if he does this, he will soon become

sensitive to correct temperature for the room and will usually detect serious variations in temperature. A large majority of schoolrooms are overheated; many teachers seem unconcerned even if the temperature reaches eighty or eighty-five degrees. Temperatures which are five or ten degrees above or below seventy affect not only the amount of work pupils may do in a given time, but it affects their discipline.

The question of ventilation is of importance from the standpoint of discipline, sanitation, and efficient work. There are very few systems which are satisfactory as found in villages and small cities. The teacher must open the windows if proper ventilation is secured. In ventilating a room through the windows the teacher should never do so by merely lowering the windows at the top. Every window may be drawn several inches at the top and still the air may have a poor circulation in the room. It is much better to lower one or two windows from the top and raise the same number at the bottom on opposite sides of the room, if possible. This arrangement will permit the air to circulate through the room, and will usually supply a fair amount of fresh air. If the teacher will add to this plan a window board for each window, the danger from drafts will be removed.

**Relaxation Exercises.** The teacher of primary and intermediate pupils should guard against fatigue by introducing relaxation exercises. At certain intervals and at all other times when fatigue becomes evident to the teacher, the pupils should be asked to

lay aside their work for marching, drilling, or breathing exercises. These exercises need not consume more than five minutes at a time; they will amply repay for all the time thus employed.

**Prevention of Idleness.** The teacher must supervise his room closely during the study periods of the pupils. Most teachers must do this at the time another class is reciting, but the teacher may soon acquire such skill in this that he will not neglect his recitation in order to supervise the pupils who are preparing other lessons. The teacher should insist that the pupils give all their time to study. The habit of concentrated study is worth more to the pupils than the technical knowledge they gain from study. A fairly accurate estimate of the character of a school is the number of pupils idle at different times during their study periods. Idleness takes the form of lying down on the desk, sliding down in the seat, whispering, sleeping, dreaming without sleeping, and standing at the desk. The teacher has a right to expect that his pupils apply themselves at all times during the preparation period.

#### QUESTIONS

1. What advantage is secured in discipline by a proper method of seating the pupils? What objection is there to allowing pupils to choose their own seats? How should the teacher proceed to seat properly the pupils in the room?
2. What liberties should be granted pupils to leave their regular seats?
3. How should the teacher control requests to leave the room? To what extent should these requests be allowed and to what extent denied?



4. In what manner should the teacher allow pupils to use the waste basket? State some improper ways in which the basket is often used.

5. Why is it inadvisable to allow two pupils to occupy the same seat for study? How should this request be controlled?

6. How may the necessity for sharpening pencils during school hours be controlled?

7. Explain the manner in which evils arise from communication in the schoolroom. How should this problem be met by the teacher? How may the practice of communication be broken after it is once established in the school?

8. Show the effect on the discipline of a room, of leaving it frequently without supervision. Why is the practice of leaving the room without supervision safe for a few unusual teachers, but unsafe for others?

9. Discuss the influence of the substitute on the problem of discipline.

10. Explain how teachers often disturb the discipline of their rooms by bad practices. What is the chief value of a long period of undisturbed study on the part of pupils?

11. In what sense does, "A quiet teacher make a quiet school"? Show common ways in which teachers are unnecessarily noisy in the schoolroom.

12. How may careful daily preparation assist the teacher in his solution of the problem of discipline?

13. What kind of "definite work" should the teacher provide if such work is to be of great assistance in discipline?

14. State the different ways in which the teacher should attempt to make his pupils comfortable in the schoolroom. Explain the relation of comfort to discipline.

15. What are some of the evidences of idleness in a school? State how idleness may be prevented or overcome.

## CHAPTER V

### MANAGEMENT OF THE CLASS

THE teacher needs a system where pupils are managed in groups. Pupils should be kept under the direction of the teacher, if they are to be managed quickly and with order. It is well to have the same order of procedure so that mechanical details may require little time and attention.

**Signals.** The management of the class begins with calling the recitation. The teacher should have some simple signal for directing the movements of the class. If classes come to the front of the room for their recitation, pupils should be required to rise in unison, then remain at the seat until the direction is given to pass to the recitation seats; the pupils should remain standing until directed to sit. Every movement should be followed by every pupil immediately after the signal is given by the teacher. This plan will insure prompt and orderly movements of the pupils to the class. The same plan should be followed when the class returns from the recitation to the seats.

The form of signal used by the teacher should be such as to attract as little attention as possible. The signal should be a quiet one, and one easily manipulated. The use of a hand bell or any bell is objectionable; the repeated sounding of the bell disturbs the quiet of the room, so necessary to the best work.

The simple commands of "stand," "pass," "sit," are good. The movements may be directed equally well by the counts, "one," "two," "three." Some teachers use to good advantage slight motions of the hands to direct the movements of the class.

**Seating of the Class.** Every pupil of the class should have his seat designated by the teacher; the pupil should use this seat in every recitation until it is changed by the teacher. The teacher should study the seating of his classes for each recitation as carefully as he studies the seating of the pupils in the room. There are some particular points that the teacher should consider when arranging the seating of the pupils in the class; the class as a whole should be seated compactly; to scatter the class over a large area, to seat the pupils in one or two rows extending either from right to left or from front to back is to weaken the attention of the class and add greatly to the difficulties of instruction. Many of the suggestions given for seating the room should be followed in seating the class. Pupils of weak attention should be seated as far to the front as possible and should be placed near pupils of strong attention.

Pupils who have slight impairment of sight or hearing should have special seating that no part of the recitation may be lost from these defects. When the class is permanently seated, it should be possible for each member to see the teacher and so far as possible see and hear the other pupils when they recite.

Where pupils recite at the regular seats, it is often advisable to assign special seats to be occupied during the recitation period by some or all of the pupils. The more widely the pupils are separated in the room the better for study, but the more compactly they are seated the better for class work.

If new seats are assigned for the class work, the changes for the class period may be directed in the same way the teacher would call the class, but if the class is large, the movements may be more conveniently directed by designating the changes by rows, as, "Rows 1 and 2, pass"; "Rows 3 and 4, pass." This plan will prevent all confusion incident to the change of pupils from one row to another, and from changes from rear to front seats, or vice versa.

**Position of the Teacher with Reference to the Class.** The teacher should guard carefully his position with reference to the class. He should keep before the class during the recitation; a position in the rear or in the midst of the class, or at either side places the teacher and the class at a great disadvantage. It cultivates the habit in pupils of turning around in the seats and thus adds greatly to inattention. The teacher should be as near the class as possible to prevent pupils in the front seats from holding their heads in an unnatural position in order to look the teacher in the face.

Whether the teacher should stand or sit while hearing the recitation must be governed largely by the size of the class, the character of the pupils, and

the strength of the teacher in control. The teacher usually commands better attention when standing; this is tiresome, however, and difficult to practice by all teachers all the time. A teacher may become accustomed to hearing the recitation while sitting, and may hold interest quite as well as when standing.

**Position of Pupils Reciting.** It is usually best, especially with small children, to have them stand when reciting; it is possible, however, for the teacher to overemphasize this formal side of the recitation. Where brief answers to questions are desired, as in the case of rapid drills, it may be best to have pupils remain seated. In recitations involving a long narrative, as in history, story reproduction, and geography, it is often a good plan to have pupils come forward and face the class in giving the recitation. This form of recitation is a great waste of time where the recitations are short; to have a pupil rise from his seat and walk to the front of the room, face the class and state that 2 and 2 are 4, is a great absurdity. The time consumed in passing to and from the seat should be put to a better use.

**Passing Supplies.** The teacher should have a definite system of passing all papers and other supplies to the pupils in the recitation. The chief requirements of a system are speed and lack of confusion. A great amount of time may be lost in a school from mere lack of a proper system in distributing materials. A good way to pass paper to each member of a class is to give each pupil in the front seat of each row several

sheets and have them pass at a given signal up the aisles and lay a sheet on the desk of each pupil. Papers may be collected in a similar way. To have the pupils pass a bunch of paper from desk to desk or to hand papers collected from one pupil to another along the rows is slow, and it is usually attended with confusion.

The passing of pencils may be quickly accomplished by providing small paper boxes—one for each aisle; by placing the pencils through the holes made in the cover, and by arranging the pencils in the box in the order in which the pupils sit in the row, pencils may be distributed and collected so that every pupil may obtain his own pencil each day almost as quickly as a pupil may pass up or down the aisle.

**Showing Pictures and Illustrations.** It is often desirable to show each member of the class a picture or other object; in order to avoid confusion the teacher must have a plan suited to the size of the pupils and the number in the class. It may be impossible for all to see the object at the same time; in this event the teacher should call the pupils in small groups to his side and show the illustration; or, he may pass slowly along the aisles and have the pupils view the illustration while sitting in their seats. It is not a good plan usually to permit the pupils to pass the material to be shown along from one to another. This plan is very distracting to those who are expected to give attention to another part of the recitation. If the pupils are permitted to crowd around the teacher at the same

time, there is likely to be confusion, and many pupils will be prevented from obtaining a good view.

**Passing Classes to the Board.** Much confusion and loss of time frequently results in passing pupils from their class seats to the board. Pupils should be assigned definite places to work at the board; they should occupy these places each time until they are changed by the teacher. When the teacher wishes the pupils to pass to the board, he should direct them in a manner similar to calling the pupils to the class; simply to say, "Pass to the board," produces hurrying and great irregularity in arriving in position for work at the board. Where work is to be assigned for the pupils to place on the board, the pupils should be given at their seats the assignment they are expected to place on the board. If crayon is to be distributed, the pupils should pass in order by the box of crayon and each supply himself as he passes to the board. Each pupil can in the same manner return his crayon to the box as he returns to his seat. It is usually a good plan to keep the crayon gathered when not in use; it prevents much waste and tramping of crayon on the floor, besides, it prevents almost entirely the tendency to mark the school furniture and other property outside of school hours.

**Answering without Permission.** One of the most distracting practices is that of permitting pupils to answer in the recitation without permission. No pupil should be permitted to ask a question, make a comment on a recitation, or answer a question until

he has been given permission to do so; there is no possible way of doing systematic work with a class where unrestrained answering is permitted. The teacher is always responsible for this habit when it exists. The evil is usually developed by the teacher's method of questioning; it will usually be found that teachers having this condition ask general questions frequently, and wait for pupils to answer promiscuously. Pupils should never be permitted to answer in this manner; the teacher should designate some pupil to answer after the question is given, and require all others to wait until the pupil selected has given his response. Pupils who are already confirmed in the habit may be broken of it if the teacher is careful in avoiding the general question and will insist upon pupils raising hands and waiting to be designated before reciting. Much of the class disorder and much general confusion as well as poor teaching have their origin in this undirected talking on the part of pupils in the recitation. The beginning teacher is almost universally afflicted with this great nuisance.

**Remove Distracting Stimuli.** The teacher should have the very closest attention from his pupils during the recitation. In order to do this he must see that nothing distracts their attention from the work of the recitation. All books should be closed before the recitation starts; it is surprising how often this simple but great necessity is neglected. No pupil can give attention to the general work of the class who is dividing his time between his text and the subject-



matter treated in the recitation. A recitation which is properly conducted should yield to every pupil of the class more than he could accomplish by studying the text in the recitation; there are so many angles to every topic under consideration in the recitation, and no pupil can benefit by them unless he follows the developments of the recitation. In many instances it is well to have all textbooks left at the seats; this requires all pupils to depend on their own resources for the recitation.

When pupils recite in the regular seats, they should have their desks clear of all books, papers, and pencils, which are likely to cause inattention.

When the recitation begins, the teacher should not permit pupils to interrupt him with questions concerning their work; he should not permit messengers from other rooms to enter and make announcements; he should not permit work to be written on the board before the class, whether it is for the class being instructed or for other pupils, or whether the work is being put on by a pupil or some teacher. All of these practices tend to break down the efficiency of the work done in the recitation. A mixture of oral and written work during the recitation is objectionable for this reason; where half of the class are given written work and the others are questioned orally, there is seldom strong work done by either division.

The teacher should not permit noise or sights in the hall to detract from his recitation; the door leading into the hall should be kept closed. It is usually

better to have an opaque glass in the door if a glass is used in the door; this will prevent the attention of pupils from being drawn to other pupils or persons who occasionally pass through the hall.

**Plan and Preparation of the Teacher.** The recitation should move briskly and toward a definite goal; this is impossible unless the teacher is thoroughly prepared on the lesson; he should know every point of the lesson so that he could recite every part of the lesson better than he expects the pupils to do it.

He should have analyzed the content of the lesson sufficiently to see the central idea in it; he should have this consciously in mind before he goes before the class. The recitation in most instances should require narration of facts and the discussions of principles. There is little profit or purpose in a recitation which consists of short questions and one-sentence answers. A question should have something centered about it. A good question stimulates thought and commands attention. A series of short unrelated questions renders attention unnecessary to all pupils except the one called on to recite; the next question is a new topic and may be recited with accuracy whether or not a word of the preceding recitation has been heard. The teacher may frequently make good use of the general thought question. The attention of pupils not called on tends to weaken after a few minutes; the skillful teacher will at such times throw in a general question for the class to study an instant; naturally the atten-

tion is brightened because all the pupils are desirous of seeing if the question is answered correctly.

**Preparation of the Pupils.** Pupils who are familiar with the lesson are interested in the recitation, and they are pleased to recite; pupils who do not know the lesson are naturally quite likely to be uninterested and inattentive. The efficiency of the teacher in instruction determines very largely the preparation of the pupils. The teacher should look well to his mode of assignment as suggested in another chapter, and he should see that the study time of the pupils is properly guarded by effective management of the room as suggested in the previous chapter.

The pupils should be given the right of way to recite in the recitation; they get in reciting much benefit that is impossible otherwise. It is very unprofitable and disgusting to pupils to prepare a lesson and come to the recitation to hear the teacher recite it. It is an easy matter for the teacher to talk too much in the recitation. The temptation is very strong for the teacher to supply what the pupil has omitted in his recitation on a topic; this practice leads to loose preparation on the part of the pupils; soon the pupil makes a short response to the question, and then follows a complete account by the teacher, who receives the benefit of answering rather than the pupils.

The preparation of the pupils is greatly affected by the habits of the teacher respecting the assignment. When an assignment is made, the teacher should make it a daily practice of calling for it in every

detail. If the pupils discover that many points of the lesson are not seriously considered by the teacher, they become indifferent and careless in their preparation; this lack of preparation and unfamiliarity induces loose attention and indifference in the class.

**Method of Conducting the Recitation.** The recitation should be so conducted that attention is necessary, and in such a manner that every pupil will experience a current of thought similar to that of the pupil actually reciting. The topic involved in the recitation should be extensive enough that one pupil may continue the recitation where another has left off.

The teacher may use this plan to advantage in arithmetic: he may call on a pupil to begin an explanation, but require another to take it up when designated to do so, and another, and so on until the problem is finished. This plan requires every pupil to explain to himself every problem used in the class; thus, the benefit derived by each pupil is the same as if each had engaged in the recitation of every problem. The same process may be followed in algebra, geometry, history, geography, and many other studies, in more or less modified form.

Very long recitations on the part of one pupil are conducive to inattention and unrest in the class; it is better to repeat the class list, if necessary, in the recitation rather than make the recitations of individual pupils long

A pupil who is reciting should not be repeatedly interrupted by the teacher; the teacher should wait until the pupil is through; if he has criticism to make, that is the proper time.

It is impossible for a pupil to do consecutive thinking if his current of thought is interrupted every ten seconds by an objection or a snarl from the teacher or some member of the class.

It is an excellent attainment for one to acquire the power to stand upon his feet and give a clear exposition of facts logically related to a topic; this ability is worth more than the mere facts of an individual topic. This ability grows gradually as one is thrown upon his own resources of thought.

The teacher should avoid giving too much attention—rather exclusive attention—to the pupil reciting. The other pupils should never feel that responsibility of the recitation at any time has been shifted to one pupil. This is likely to be the case where the teacher turns his attention to a single pupil in a conspicuous manner. Often the teacher strives too long in the general recitation to get a pupil to comprehend a difficult point; the teacher explains, he insists, he piles illustration upon illustration until the pupil becomes confused and bewildered; the pupil becomes more and more the center of attraction, and his embarrassment increases along with the impatience of the teacher, which is increased by the growing restlessness of the other members of the class, or perhaps, by disorder in the room; the teacher sternly commands, "Now you

think," and "Don't you answer that way again," "I'm going to put you back in the next grade, if you don't do better." The teacher still pursues the course, which has for several minutes been a lost battle, until the pupil breaks into tears, yet the teacher tries even then to "make it clear." When a pupil is becoming confused, when the teacher is losing patience, when the class is becoming restless—yea, before these stages in the game are reached—it is time to excuse the pupil and go on with the recitation. Let the teacher take the pupil in question outside of classtime, and explain the difficulty over and over, simply, more simply, and more simply yet, but with patience and cheerfulness, and at some point he "will understand."

#### QUESTIONS

1. Explain the importance of definite signals in passing classes to and from the recitations. What are some of the tests of good signals?

2. How should pupils be seated for the recitation? What advantages are secured by proper seating?

3. What position should the teacher occupy with reference to the class when conducting the recitation? Mention some exercises where the teacher should almost invariably stand in teaching. Mention some instances in schools where the teacher is at an advantage if he sits while conducting the recitations.

4. To what extent should pupils stand when reciting? When is such a requirement a waste of time?

5. What are the requirements of a good system in distributing supplies for the recitation? What is the importance of having a good system? If five minutes each day are wasted in distributing and collecting supplies, how much time would be needlessly lost in a year? In many schools this loss averages twenty minutes a day. On this basis compute the loss for eight years.

On the basis of the annual cost of a thousand dollars for the school what is the money value of the time lost?

6. How may pictures and other illustrations be shown to a class in a speedy, orderly, and effective manner?

7. What system would you have in your school for passing pupils to the board for work? How many seconds should elapse between the time the pupils leave their recitation seats until they are at work at the board? Can a system be so perfected that the time may be reduced to fifteen seconds?

8. What are the objections to pupils asking and answering questions in the class without permission? How does this evil arise? How may it be corrected?

9. Mention several kinds of distracting stimuli frequently permitted in the recitation. Compare the probable loss of time due to distracting stimuli, with the loss likely to be sustained from the practices under consideration in questions 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. Suppose a teacher's management is defective in all of these particulars, what amount of time would you estimate such a teacher loses during the year?

10. Show the relation of the preparation of the teacher to class-control. Point out right and wrong ways of questioning to secure good attention in the class.

11. What relation exists between attention in the class and the character of preparation of the lesson on the part of the pupils? What influence has the tendency of the teacher to recite the lesson, upon the preparation of the lesson by the pupils? How does this tendency influence attention in the class?

12. Show the importance of calling for an assignment that is made.

13. Give a method of conducting the recitation that is strongly conducive to attention. Show how the method may be applied to the several subjects of the course.

14. How may a recitation be managed so as to avoid giving too much attention to one pupil in the class? What evil results follow when a teacher forgets the class and gives exclusive attention to a pupil who has unusual difficulty with some point in the lesson? Explain how such a condition should be managed.

## CHAPTER VI

### MANAGEMENT OF THE PLAYGROUND

A LARGE part of the annoyances incident to the management of a school have their origin in the playground. Many of the difficulties "settled" on the road home arise during the intermissions at school; most of the complaints from neighbors and those passing the school originate while the pupils have a free hand at play.

**Supervision Necessary.** Constant supervision of the pupils at play is an extreme necessity. This is one of the most difficult features of school management for many teachers to realize.

Teachers spend long hours trying to adjust difficulties which arise almost daily, when systematic supervision of the ground would prevent their occurrence. The teacher should supervise the playground every minute the pupils are engaged in play—before school, at recess, at noon, and at the close of school. The presence of the teacher prevents rudeness, profanity, vulgarity, and accident. If the teacher can participate in the play, it enables him to supervise and at the same time add interest to the games, gives him an added insight into the characters of his charges, and binds them closer to him. The teacher who knows the characteristics of his pupils only as they are mani-



fested in the schoolroom is grossly ignorant of many important traits of his pupils.

**Working at Recess.** The teacher who uses the recess period for work errs for several reasons; he loses the opportunity for supervision; he deprives himself of the needed recreation; and he is likely to deprive others from rest and recreation. The teacher who goes out to play with the pupils at the intermissions returns to his work fresh with vigor of mind and body. The few minutes used in recreation by the teacher will give him strength and energy for effective intellectual pursuits after school hours; he will be able to do a high degree of work much longer than would be possible otherwise.

The recess period and the period before school when the pupils are on the playground, are too important to be utilized to place work on the board, or to correct work which has been placed there by pupils in recitation periods. The teacher should place all such work on the board the previous evening before leaving his room, or should arrive early enough in the morning for that purpose, before the pupils arrive. A little planning will make it possible to place at other times all work necessary to be written on the board.

Many rural teachers attempt to hear advanced pupils at recess. It is doubtful if good work can be done at this time under the conditions likely to exist in most schools at the recess time. The division of the teacher's interest between the playground, his class, and those likely to be in the room, renders the

best work impossible. Whatever he might gain, however, will be more than counterbalanced by the losses and disadvantages suggested above.

**Keeping in at Recess.** The practice of keeping pupils in at recess to prepare delinquent lessons, or for punishment, is objectionable. The difficulties which the teacher thus attempts to correct should be approached in another manner. If it seems desirable to require extra study from the pupil, the recess period is not the best time to require it. A few minutes at the close of school may be used for this purpose. A pupil who is deprived of his recreation at recess is unable to accomplish the most when school is called, because of fatigue. It is often better to disregard slight inaccuracies in preparation for a time rather than detain pupils outside of regular school hours. The teacher should study carefully to discover the cause underlying poor lessons. He will frequently find that there is a deeper reason than lack of study.

**Remove Suggestive Objects.** Pupils are prone to make use of all materials found on the ground. The teacher should be constantly on the alert to discover the presence of objects which might give rise to unpleasant occurrences at school. Often during the night, objects find a place in the school yard; the children discover them early in the morning or during the day, and disagreeable experiences follow. When the teacher arrives in the morning, he should look the premises over to see what dangers might lurk there, which were absent the previous evening.

After Hallowe'en a teacher came to his school; he noticed a wagon wheel lying in the yard near the building; its presence suggested nothing to him, but when the pupils arrived, their first impulse was to do something with that new curiosity, which it truly was to them—on the school ground. Before the opening of school several of the boys had succeeded in inducing another boy to get on the wheel, wind his legs about it, and get ready for a ride. A stick was placed through the hub and held firmly on the ground, while several boys revolved the wheel. In the absence of the teacher the pupils continued to hold the boy on the wheel and revolve it rapidly. In a few minutes the boy had lost consciousness, and was only saved from serious injury by the accidental discovery of the event by the teacher. The boy was all the remainder of the day recovering his equilibrium. It is clear that the thoughtful teacher would have removed the wheel before the arrival of the pupils.

In a neighboring school a boy found on the grounds a bottle partly filled with whiskey. He showed it to some of the other boys, and soon a challenge was made, coupled with a dare, to taste the contents. The natural outcome of the event was four drunken boys, with all the exaggerations and gossip incident to an occurrence of this character.

Traveling troupes and circuses often suggest much mischief to the plastic child mind. The following incident shows how these may at times affect the school. A Wild West show came to the village; most of

the pupils went, which was all well and good. One of the stirring exhibitions of the show was the capture and summary hanging of a thief in true western style. A rope was placed about the victim's neck, thrown over the limb of a tree, and he was drawn up and let down at intervals to force a confession. The tragedy was re-enacted at school; several of the boys out of pure fun captured a schoolmate, placed a rope about his neck; not knowing all the points practiced by the showmen, they used a "slipknot" instead of the correct one; the pupil was choked to insensibility before a passerby interrupted the procedure and prevented death. There are enough possibilities amply to justify and require the closest watch of the playground.

**Teaching New Games.** Pupils are interested in new games because they rarely know how to play many games. The teacher should teach new games until pupils have a variety of games to occupy them in play. An excellent list and directions for playing the games may be had from almost any publishing house. Much valuable material may be had along this and general lines of play from The National Playground Association, Metropolitan Life Building, 1 Madison Avenue, New York City. Games should be suited to the age and sex of the pupils; some games are suited to boys, which are not enjoyed by girls, and vice versa; some games are suited to younger pupils, which do not appeal to older ones.

**Equipment of the Ground.** With little expense some equipment may be added to the ground, which

will aid the teacher greatly in the management of the playground. One of the things most enjoyed by pupils is the swing. It is inexpensive and easily erected. There is no piece of apparatus which may be secured for pupils at twenty times the cost, which will hold the admiration of pupils so long. The teeter board, the jumping rope, the tennis court, the basketball, football, volley ball, and parallel bars are all within easy reach of the enterprising teacher.

**Benefits of Play.** The benefits of play are not confined to mere occupation, although this is an important function for the teacher. Vigorous play puts new life into the pupils, and affords a profitable outlet for confined energies; there is a strong desire for motor expression on the part of growing children; the playground provides the opportunity for this expression. Pupils who engage in vigorous play return to their books with a different attitude; study under these conditions becomes a pleasant recreation, just as the joys of play are intensified by study.

Expression through play is highly educative; it requires active thinking to play, to meet the new situations constantly arising in the game. The play of pupils should be free and spontaneous. The teacher should not become a director in the sense of being a hindrance. It is possible to direct every game so mechanically that it ceases to be play, and becomes work.

The recess period is so important for play that no teacher should hold pupils in the schoolroom for slight

causes; it may be cold, muddy, or deep snow, but these are not sufficient reasons to have indoor recess; such recesses are often little better than the regular work as a means of recreation. Pupils who have a tendency to stay indoors should be encouraged to go out at the recess time. They need to form the habit and desire for play.

#### QUESTIONS

1. How does the conduct of pupils on the playground affect the general conduct of the pupils in the room and the recitation?
2. How and when should the teacher supervise the playground? Why is such constant supervision necessary?
3. What are the objections to the teacher working during the recess time? How may the teacher avoid working at recess?
4. What special objection is there to keeping pupils in at recess?
5. What constant attention should the teacher give to the school grounds to prevent annoyances?
6. In what manner may the teacher influence the games played by pupils?
7. Of what advantage is playground equipment in the management of a school? How and what may the teacher provide at little expense?
8. Discuss fully the benefits of play. What relation exists between play, and conduct in the schoolroom and the recitation?

## CHAPTER VII

### PUNISHMENT

PUNISHMENT is necessary at times in some form in every school. The degree of judgment manifested in the infliction of punishment has much to do with the success of the teacher in the management of his school. There is no other phase of the teacher's work which demands more careful deliberation than the problem of punishment.

**Publicity Objectionable.** The punishment of pupils before the school is a serious mistake in almost every case where the punishment is corporal in its nature. Reproof administered in public accomplishes very little, especially with older pupils. To approach a pupil of high school age and often of grammar school age and attempt to discipline him publicly is likely to lead to open rebellion; the same pupil in a large majority of cases, if taken in private, where all of the consequences of his acts may receive thorough consideration, will acknowledge his error and comply cheerfully with the teacher's requirements. The teacher who walks down the aisle and deliberately slaps a pupil or otherwise places his hands on him violently courts resistance on the part of the pupil. A boy who has pride and strength would be impelled to fight—it is the perfectly logical reaction. It is very doubtful if a

majority of teachers would exhibit sufficient self-control to resist avenging such an insult. Punishment may be necessary in many cases, but its effectiveness is greatly enhanced by administering it in private. The topics discussed in the homes of the pupils are the unusual happenings; these should not include the more distasteful features of the school. The school soon secures a reputation for commotion and disorder out of all proportion to its deserts. If punishments are administered in private, many pupils will remain wholly ignorant of the occurrence.

**Improper Punishments.** There are many kinds of improper punishments as compared with those that are proper. Many teachers cast discredit upon themselves by the character of their punishments more than by the amount of punishment. The day of locking pupils in closets is past owing to modern conceptions of education, though it is still practiced occasionally by the unthinking teacher. It should be classed with the "something will get you" methods of managing children. It is conducive to fright and severe shock to small children. The dark has a great horror for some children because of certain methods and superstitions practiced in the home. This may superinduce or augment nervous disorders which would be difficult of eradication.

The practice of tying cloths over the mouths of children to prevent whispering is open to severe criticism. Many of these cloths are filthy and unsani-



tary even if the method itself were otherwise free from objection. The presence of pupils scattered about the room with their mouths bandaged attracts the attention of other pupils, which entails a great loss of time. The cause of communication should be investigated; the teacher will discover that other remedies are necessary to remove the cause.

Washing out the mouth is a common practice for curing offenders from the use of bad words. This method should be condemned as an improper punishment for this or any other offense. It is not the mouth that is at fault; the teacher may as well wash one's garments as a means of reforming his character. Here, again, the teacher needs to analyze the case more deeply for the cause. A careful study of the composition and manufacture of most grades of soap would cause the teacher to hesitate to wash his own mouth with it, and he should hesitate for other reasons to place it in the mouths of children. Unusual punishments are often also particularly repugnant and brand the teacher as odd and eccentric.

Placing pupils with the opposite sex as a means of punishment is, for small children, a form of humiliation to be avoided. It is likely to lead to taunts outside of the school and to engender a spirit of hatred of one pupil against another, which the school should discourage rather than cultivate in any form. It often happens that the pupil singled out for the instrument of punishment is one most lacking in praiseworthy

attributes. It is a manifest injustice to magnify unduly the misfortunes of one who is already too conspicuous because of them.

There are other forms of punishment which savor of the elements of torture: holding heavy objects, sitting or standing in fixed positions, deprivations of necessary privileges for long periods, are punishments of this type. All of these punishments hark back to old conceptions of punishment and reformation; it was the custom of civil authorities to torture those guilty of offenses; human ingenuity taxed its resources to the limit to devise more severe instruments of torture; all of these have been put aside by all peoples in the first ranks of civilization, and they are in vogue now only in the countries in the lowest stages of progress. The teacher needs the new vision and the new insight; his efforts should be directed along the lines of formation, culture, growth, evolution.

Apologizing is frequently an improper form of punishment, and should be resorted to sparingly by the teacher. To force an apology upon one has no meaning; it is productive of evil rather than good. A pupil who genuinely admits his wrong, has, at least for his first transgression, balanced his account. If he desires in addition to make an apology, it is commendable, but not otherwise. The teacher often errs by supposing that some public display of admission of guilt and punishment are necessary before a wrong is corrected. It is a misconception to suppose that such is necessary to deter others.

**Low Grading as a Punishment.** The standing of a pupil should not be influenced by his deportment; conduct and scholarship belong to different categories. It is cowardly and unjust for the teacher to demote a pupil or reduce his normal grade because of his deportment. A standard of conduct thus maintained is not such as to abide. The fault in misconduct lies in the motive and one's conception of duty; these should be the points of attack if substantial results are realized. This may not always be easy; it may not always be possible, but it should be the regular avenue of approach. The teacher who has not tried to perfect himself in the art of reasoning with young people has not come into full consciousness of his power to influence conduct in this manner.

A boy seventeen years of age neglected to write his notes in his science work until he became several days behind his class. The teacher issued the ultimatum that the notes must be completed before he could be admitted to the class in any other recitation. The next day he did not pass to his recitation as usual; the principal in charge of the study hall noticed that he did not pass as usual and asked for the reason. The pupil said, "Teacher said I couldn't come to the recitation any more till I wrote up my notes." The matter was not pressed further at the time; the principal considered the matter one which merited private treatment. At the close of school he detained the boy for a more extensive investigation of the case. He called the boy before him in private; when the boy was

asked about the matter, he was white with anger and with much display of emotion he said, "I'll never write up those notes; I'll quit school first." After listening to the pupil's story, the principal in perfect calmness said, "Now, James, you do not want to write those notes because you think the teacher wants to compel you to do it; and you want to show that you cannot be compelled to do it against your will; is not that the whole question in a 'nutshell'?" With a little flush and a grin the boy said, "Yes, I guess that's about it." "Tomorrow," said the principal, "you will have those notes written and will take your place in the class; you are man enough to do it, and I have confidence that you will comply with so simple and reasonable a demand; that's all; I'm not looking for any more trouble in this regard." The next day the notes were written; the boy assumed his place in the class without comment; the incident was closed. And, further, the boy's attitude was permanently changed. But, suppose the command had been issued "you must"? There was no force at the command of the school to compel compliance. Only one result could have followed this course—withdrawal from school.

**Appealing in Improper Ways.** Some appeals to pupils are of little value as incentives to better conduct. To ask a boy to be good for his mother's sake, to do better for the school's sake, or the teacher's sake, is of little consequence. To ask one to be good in order to secure a good grade in deportment or to possess a prize seeks vainly for results.

**Use of Tact.** The necessity for punishment may frequently be eliminated by the exercise of a little judgment on the part of the teacher. Difficulties often develop from slight incidents. One day a boy came to his teacher at recess. He said, "I just can't write those problems; my thumb is too sore; I can't hold the pencil." "Let me see that thumb," said the teacher sympathetically. The boy heroically unwrapped his thumb and showed an ugly gash. "Why," said the teacher, "that is a bad thumb; how did you do that?" The boy gave her a vivid account of just how it happened. After he was through, the teacher said, "Don't you think if you would take your pencil in this way [showing him] you could write without hurting your sore thumb?" "Yes," said the boy proudly, "I'll manage it!"

Sometimes it may be difficult to discover persons responsible for certain offenses; in these cases it is best to make as little disturbance as possible until the party is definitely known; in the meantime, it is well to study the cause of the disturbance.

A teacher was greatly annoyed by pupils throwing matches on the floor; hardly a class arose to pass that there was not a snapping of matches; upon investigation he discovered that the matches in the laboratory, which was adjacent to his room, were exposed to plain view and were easily accessible. He removed the matches and placed them in concealment; the trouble from matches ceased almost at once. The same principle here involved applies in many instances;

great care should be taken to remove from access shot, corn, beads, and other small objects which might be easily rolled or thrown about the room.

A teacher who was greatly disturbed by the throwing of marbles in her class was at a loss to discover the guilty party; she finally took her roll one evening and made a close study of it; she came to the conclusion that there was only one boy in that class who was likely to resort to a practice of that kind; the next day she took this boy in private and said, "Charles, I am convinced that you are throwing marbles in my class, and this must cease at once; if you engage in that practice again, I shall be duly informed of it; I want you to govern yourself accordingly." The throwing ceased, because she was skillful enough to pick out the guilty party.

**On Being Annoyed.** The teacher who is easily annoyed is likely to have many causes for punishment that the teacher who is differently constituted escapes. The teacher who gets greatly excited and who creates a great stir when things go wrong furnishes the pupils much amusement. It is best to cultivate composure under all circumstances—it often spoils the fun.

The janitor of a village school was determined to avenge a wrong committed one evening by persons placing a small heap of ashes in front of the boiler room door; he reported the case to the principal, who advised him to remove the ashes and say nothing about it. He did as he was directed, but the act was repeated the following night; again, he was more determined to

keep watch that he might discover and punish the offenders; but he was again advised to keep away and wait for further developments. The disturbance was repeated for the third time, but still nobody showed annoyance and apparently nobody enjoyed any fun. The disturbance ceased, because to resort to that amount of trouble without compensation was too much for a boy of a practical turn of mind. There is always time enough to get disturbed, and time enough to keep watch and lay plans to apprehend those who are guilty when it becomes clearly evident that these subtle disturbances are not likely to die a natural death.

**Corporal Punishment.** Corporal punishment is by no means a cure-all. The thoughtful teacher resorts to it less and less as he studies its effects. One might hesitate to forbid it entirely under all circumstances; it may be the only tool some teacher can use to compel obedience; obedience with corporal punishment is certainly better than bedlam in a school, but it should be displaced for something better as soon as possible. Teachers who resort to corporal punishment frequently, rarely have a high class of discipline in their rooms, it matters not by what standard good discipline is determined. Could one examine the reports for a year in a system of schools where all the teachers and conditions in other respects are unknown to him, and if he should determine the number of cases of corporal punishment for each teacher, he would be reasonably safe in concluding that the teacher having the

highest per cent of corporal punishment was the weakest teacher in the force in discipline and the teacher maintaining the lowest standard of conduct in his room. Back of a constant need of corporal punishment is a cause which operates to make it necessary; this cause may be a teacher of weak personality; it may be a low standard of instruction; it may be poor organization or careless supervision; wherever it exists, it would be possible to place a teacher who would eliminate its necessity in a few days and yet maintain a standard of discipline all but perfect. Some teachers always have the worst pupils, the worst parents, the worst board, the worst community, and the worst associates; others always have the best. So much depends upon the teacher.

There is a type of pupil who is unmoved by corporal punishment; no amount of beating will produce in him a single desirable response; he cannot be moved to tears, and he will not confess his error or promise not to repeat the offense; he seems to obtain real satisfaction out of his ability to pass through such an ordeal so heroically. Corporal punishment in such cases results in positive harm.

A pupil who is invulnerable to corporal punishment is often easily controlled by other and less drastic methods. To be required to remain after school and devote thirty minutes to study for five or six evenings seems an unbearable task to some of this type. A little study and experimentation will enable most



teachers to mete out punishment suited to the individuality of the pupil.

Pupils in the upper grammar grades, and especially in the high school, should be controlled by other methods; the per cent of cases amenable to corporal punishment is so low as to render it inadvisable. To punish thus a girl in these years is almost universally a mistake. When the teacher is convinced that the exigencies of the situation demand so drastic a move, suspension is usually preferable. Public opinion seldom supports the teacher who uses corporal punishment on a girl above the intermediate grades; the teacher who attempts it is likely to shift the center of blame from the pupil to himself.

**Punishing the Teacher.** It is a mistake to endeavor to impress pupils with the extreme sorrow and disappointment their conduct entails upon the teacher. Too often this claim lacks a true basis of sincerity. Teachers have often carried this notion of punishment to the extremity of asking the pupil to take the instrument and apply it to them. Teachers have by this soft attitude toward punishment been chagrined frequently by having the lash applied to them by the offending pupil with a genuine relish instead of an imaginary anguish. Attitudes of this character cheapen the teacher in the eyes of his pupils and render him a fit subject for ridicule.

**Detention as a Means of Punishment.** Detention may be resorted to effectively at times as a means of punishment, especially with older pupils. The best

time to do this is generally at the close of school in the evening. Pupils thus detained should be required to accomplish a definite amount of work; this work should be carefully assigned and passed upon by the teacher. The time of detention should be limited only by the accomplishment of the assigned task. The teacher can easily prepare a list of problems sufficient for several evenings; each evening he may pass to the pupils due to perform tasks at the close of school the list of problems, and designate a number, say ten, to be solved and handed to him for inspection before the pupil is excused.

This plan may be used to suppress persistent whispering, note-writing, and truancy. Specific punishment, however, should not be resorted to by the teacher until other means have been exhausted to correct the evil. In this event it is well to apply the punishment in a definite and systematic manner. The following plan works well usually with chronic offenders: The teacher places the offenders on a roll provided for the purpose; he checks each pupil minus for unsatisfactory conduct and plus for satisfactory conduct; a pupil who checks "minus" for a given day is required to do service after school hours for three successive days or longer until he is able to secure a record of three consecutive "plus" checks; he is then excused from service until his record shows one "minus" check, at which time he must again begin serving. The pupil's conduct may show little improvement at first, but a persistent policy pursued in its application

will soon convince the offender that it is better to comply with requirements than to make up lost time at the close of school.

It may seem that this plan places too much additional service upon the teacher. It may be said in reply, however, that all forms of punishment do this to some extent; the teacher must pay the price of disorder in one form or another. He may neglect to control his school on the plea that he is not required to give extra time on the account of offenders, but because of his failure to become master he may be required to yield his position to another who is determined to give whatever is necessary to meet the situation. The teacher who is afraid of himself, the one who is easily "punished" by administering a punishment when it is needed seldom gets control of the situation.

A pupil who loses time through truancy should be compelled to return a full measure of time for the loss sustained, and more if he is a chronic offender. Truancy arises in most instances because of a desire to obtain additional time for private use; when the loss is replaced from the pupil's resources, nothing is gained by the pupil.

**Isolation as a Means of Punishment.** A pupil who is an habitual offender should be compelled to forfeit his right to instruction with other pupils; no pupil should be privileged to deter his schoolmates from the highest benefits of instruction. If it is impossible to instruct others to advantage while he is

present in the recitation, he should be deprived of the instruction in the class with them. He should be given his instruction separately and outside of school hours. When he manifests a willingness to comply with the teacher's requirements, he should be reinstated. A pupil may often be removed entirely from the room and be required to sit in some specially provided place where it will be impossible for him to disturb others. The method of isolation should be applied only in extreme cases and then with older pupils; it should be considered as one of the methods of last resort; it may prevent the necessity for expulsion, and be the means of enabling a pupil who for the time is unmindful of his own interests, to obtain an education.

**Sending Pupils Home.** It should be rarely necessary to send a pupil home for a breach of discipline; to do so for slight offenses is a serious mistake. Nothing is gained by it, and much is lost; the teacher thus confesses his inability to manage the pupil; this fact is conducive to further violations from the pupil offending. It often happens that a pupil who is sent home does not report at home; he is virtually rewarded by the teacher with a holiday for his disorder. To send two or more pupils home at the same time is to weaken still more the effectiveness of this form of punishment; the incident becomes a matter of mutual heroism in the eyes of the offending parties. The teacher places too much reliance on the parent in sending the pupil home for correction. The sympathy of the parent in

such cases is usually with the teacher, when he has a full knowledge of the facts; but, very often the parent is dependent upon the pupil for his knowledge of the case; in this event the pupil rarely gives a report which is unfavorable to himself.

**Resorting to Higher Authority.** Every teacher should control his own school wherever it is at all possible; he should inflict all punishments and be the chief mediator in the settlement of all questions. He should consult freely with those higher in authority for advice and for the purpose of determining whether his policy is approved, but to surrender common cases to others for adjustment weakens materially the pupils' respect for the authority of the teacher. The teacher who habitually sends his pupils to the principal for correction is seldom able to maintain a high standard of discipline in his school. The number of reports of "Sent from class" increase in direct proportion to the inefficiency of the teacher.

**Teacher's Relation to the Parent.** The teacher should not call to his aid the support of the parent except in great emergencies. His authority is weakened by so doing, if the support were freely given, but it is quite likely to be denied. After the teacher inflicts punishment, it is unwise to go to the parent to "explain." No explanation is due; the teacher has simply discharged his duty. If the parent is not satisfied with the case, he should come to the teacher voluntarily, who should extend him every courtesy; he should define his position clearly without any disposi-

tion to compromise with wrongdoing. A teacher should never act until he is unmistakably in the right; then he should have the courage to stand by his decision whatever the cost; a firm hand, extended in the right direction, is unlikely to be opposed successfully.

In cases of gross disobedience the teacher may call to the school the parent; it may be desirable to send the pupil home to bring the parent for a conference and a subsequent understanding before the pupil is permitted to continue his work in school. The teacher's purpose here is not so much to obtain aid as it is to explain the circumstances to the parent in the presence of his child before radical measures are applied. He is thus duly informed of consequences likely to follow a further continuance of breaches of discipline on the part of his child; he can have little excuse after he has been apprised of the facts, if it is necessary to deny his child the privileges of the school.

A teacher assumed the management of a high school where much annoyance had been experienced by pupils leaving the school during school hours. Within a few weeks after school opened, two boys in the senior class withdrew from the school without being excused and without announcement. The next morning when they arrived, they were sent to the office; they were informed that they were no longer considered members of the school, and could not be re-instated unless satisfactory arrangements could be made with their parents. They were asked to take up the matter with their parents, if they wished to continue their

work in school; the condition required of them was that they bring the parents—either father or mother—to the school building. They returned home and explained the matter to their fathers; they came to the school where the principal explained the consequences of such practices, and announced that he would not under any circumstances permit such practices to continue; he would not agree to re-instate the offenders unless the parents should guarantee there would not be a repetition of the offense; the agreement was given, and there were very few offenses of this character in the subsequent six years of his administration of the schools.

**Complaining to the Parent.** The parent seldom appreciates being reminded of the faults of his own children, whatever may be the basis for the complaint. The teacher should accept the pupils as they are, and endeavor to correct their deficiencies so far as possible. The disposition of the teacher to relate his troubles to the parent is abhorred by most patrons of a school. The teacher may be mistaken in his judgment in many instances before he has seen all of the qualities of a child manifested; it may be that the evil tendency which is being manifested is likely to be of short duration. It is impossible to pass final judgments upon growing children. Not all of their mistakes and evil tendencies lead to the door of the prison.

The teacher should use great caution in his attitude toward reports he receives concerning the conduct of the child outside of school hours. Many of these

reports are greatly exaggerated and frequently are wholly false; at any rate, they are no more the concern of the teacher than they should be of persons in other walks of life. It is questionable if the teacher should add to his already complicated relations with his patrons by assuming to assist the parent in directing the conduct of his children in the home. If he obtains information which he deems advisable to place in possession of the parent, he should have unmistakable evidence of its reliability. Reports made on hearsay are very unreliable.

**Ridicule, Sarcasm, and Irony.** The use of ridicule, sarcasm, and irony are objectionable in the schoolroom. They indicate a wrong spirit in the teacher and are likely to develop objectionable attitudes in the pupils. Their use as a means of punishment is out of keeping with the dignity which should characterize the relationship between teacher and pupils. The designation of pupils by any appellations other than their true names finds no place in a school presided over by a teacher of the highest type; such practices are too crude to be raised to the dignity of schoolroom usage

#### QUESTIONS

1. Give reasons why punishment should be administered in private.
2. Give the six kinds of improper punishments commonly practiced in some schools.
3. What is the objection to compelling a pupil to apologize for some offense?



4. Discuss low grading as a means of punishment. What caution must a teacher exercise in the management of a stubborn pupil? Show that a stubborn pupil is not necessarily an unruly pupil, and is not necessarily weak in scholarship.

5. What do you understand by the use of tact as a means of avoiding the necessity for punishment? Show how trivial matters in school may, through lack of tact or faulty judgment, lead to serious consequences.

6. Why should the teacher cultivate great self-control amidst the annoyances incident to the school?

7. Discuss the merits of corporal punishment. Why do some teachers need to resort to corporal punishment so often while other teachers seldom use it, even with the same pupils? In what instances is corporal punishment inadvisable?

8. Discuss "punishing the teacher" as a means of punishing the pupil.

9. How should detention be used as a means of punishment? In what manner may it be used with chronic offenders? Why is detention a natural punishment for truancy?

10. Show that all forms of punishment usually place an extra burden upon the teacher.

11. How should isolation be used in punishment?

12. What are the objections to sending pupils home as a means of punishment?

13. Why should the teacher inflict punishment upon his own pupils rather than to send them to higher authority for this purpose?

14. When is it advisable and when is it not advisable to confer with the parent regarding the punishment of a pupil?

15. Why should the teacher exercise great caution about complaining to parents about the faults of their children? What attitude should the teacher assume toward the misconduct of his pupils outside of school?

16. Discuss ridicule, sarcasm, and irony as means of punishment.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE ASSIGNMENT

**Importance of the Assignment.** The most important part of the recitation is the period of the assignment. If one can be present when a teacher makes his assignment in the recitation, he can determine quite accurately the efficiency of the teacher. The teacher's conception of teaching, his appreciation of the difficulties of the subject to the learner, and his whole grasp of educational principles are revealed by the character of his assignment. The assignment should be well made if nothing else is accomplished in the recitation. A great amount of poor work, a large amount of idleness, numerous false notions, and much waste of time are traceable to lack of skill on the part of the teacher in making assignments.

**Preparation of the Teacher for the Assignment.** Experience alone can make the teacher highly skilled in making lesson assignments. There is a delicate adjustment of the lesson to the ability of the class and the progress of the pupils from day to day that can be made only as the needs are determined each day. There are, however, some very definite requirements which the teacher must meet if he is to be even approximately successful in making assignments suited to the needs of his pupils. The teacher in all instances

must make careful preparation for the assignment in advance. No teacher can make a proper assignment who is unfamiliar with the matter in the assignment in every detail. The inexperienced teacher often makes inadequate preparation for the assignment because of his unfamiliarity with the capabilities of the pupils of the age he is instructing and because of his lack of appreciation of the inherent difficulties of the subject to the learner. It is necessary for the teacher to study very carefully the lesson he intends to assign. He must be familiar with the subject-matter as a whole and in detail. He should know the lesson better on the day he makes his assignment to the pupils than he expects them to know the lesson on the following day. Matter in the assignment which he finds difficult to comprehend he may safely assume will cause his pupils greater difficulty, and to many pupils will be impossible of accomplishment. The teacher should endeavor to place himself in the position of his pupils and endeavor to appreciate as far as possible their point of view and their difficulties. He will be greatly assisted if he can recall accurately his own experience and difficulties at the time he was trying to master the subject. He should then try to bring before his class material and illustrations of various kinds which will enable his pupils to acquire his present conception of the subject without experiencing his perplexities. A teacher who studies his subject, his class, and the defects of his text may soon reach such a perfect understanding of the difficulties of the

subject to the learner, and he may come to know so well the mental characteristics of pupils at that stage of learning, that he can open his book at almost any page and tell with great accuracy just what difficulties his pupils will experience with the subject at that point, and he will know just what form of explanation is necessary to set the learner right. The teacher who has become master in these two directions, master of the subject-matter and master in his knowledge of the pupils may lead his pupils along so skillfully that they will grow intellectually as gradually and naturally as a plant grows.

**Preparation of the Pupils for the Assignment.** Before pupils are assigned a lesson for preparation, the teacher must be sure they know how to proceed to make an intelligent effort in the preparation. It is rarely advisable to ask pupils to prepare a lesson which involves new subject-matter until the teacher has explained the nature of the work to be done. The teacher cannot rely upon introductory explanations given in the text to familiarize the pupils with the nature of the work to be done. This introductory work must be done by the teacher. After it is done in the class, enough of the preparation of the lesson should then be done under the direction of the teacher to enable him to judge unmistakably concerning the ability of the pupils to prepare the lesson assigned. It may be that pupils are given an assignment in arithmetic which involves a knowledge of the lever. It is not likely that pupils are familiar with the prin-

ciple of the lever; they cannot solve problems where this principle is involved until they have had the principle thoroughly explained. This, then, becomes the objective point of the teacher before he assigns the problems for the lesson. The thermometer and the clock dial are usually introduced in arithmetic before the pupils are familiar with them sufficiently to solve problems involving them. It is needless to make the attempt until they are understood by the pupils.

A certain teacher was studying *Merchant of Venice* with a freshman class in the high school. At a given point in the work she asked the pupils to write a character sketch of Bassanio. Nothing had been said before about the nature of a character sketch. The method of procedure was not even hinted. The unexplained statement was made, "Prepare a character sketch of Bassanio." The pupils were then sent from the class to grope in the dark and wander aimlessly trying to reach some goal by accident, a goal they would not recognize if it were attained. The following day the pupils returned to the recitation with three or four disconnected sentences about Bassanio. Some of the pupils had not even made an attempt. If the teacher had explained the method of procedure; if she had asked the pupils to open their books and read with her a few of the speeches of Bassanio with the definite purpose of determining from these the manner in which his character is revealed to the reader, there would have been some well-written sketches for the

lesson the next day, and the pupils would have received a permanent lesson of value in writing character sketches. After three days of aimless work, the teacher saw the necessity of doing the very thing she should have done the first day. There is too much time wasted in school by setting pupils adrift to accomplish something, not well defined, by the hit-or-miss process. If all of the loss of time thus wasted could be saved by intelligent direction from the first day of a pupil's school life to the last, the time required to accomplish the work of the schools would be very greatly shortened. The great difference in teachers is a difference in the saving of time through careful preparation for assigned tasks. The skillful teacher can predict very definitely the results which will follow a given task assigned her pupils; the unskillful teacher cannot tell what the harvest will be until the pupils report.

**How Much Aid to Give the Pupils.** It is never a question with the teacher whether he should or should not give his pupils aid toward the preparation of assigned lessons; the only question is the amount of aid which is necessary. Without any aid the progress of some pupils is impossible, and the progress of many pupils is very slow. To give pupils more aid than is necessary is to take from them the means of growth, and to give them less aid than is necessary leads to discouragement and often to indifference in the preparation of the lesson. Some teachers give no aid at all; they think pupils gain strength by making

attempts to master the lesson, although they may not understand the difficulties assigned them. After the pupils have made the attempt, they argue, the teacher can give just such assistance as is necessary. Experience shows, however, that pupils instructed on this plan are rarely strong in their grasp of the subject, and they are rarely conspicuous for struggling with difficult points in the assignment. It is certainly poor economy and poor pedagogy for a teacher to assign a lesson in mathematics, for example, without any comment, and on the following day call for "problems you were unable to understand," and take the whole time of the recitation solving the problems for the class, when a few well-directed suggestions would have enabled a large majority of the class to have worked out the solutions for themselves. It is generally true that problems thus solved and hastily explained by the teacher are rarely understood by those who have had trouble with them. These pupils need to arrive at the solutions of the problems by a logical marshaling of the conditions and principles underlying them. This is impossible where another does most of the thinking for the pupils.

**Getting the Assignment from the Text.** Teachers frequently have trouble in getting pupils to master the subject-matter of the text in a manner to recite it well at the time of the recitation. This ability is not acquired in a day, but it is an accomplishment which may be acquired by the pupils if they are properly directed by the teacher. There is a stage in school work where

the teacher must make a conscious effort to train the pupils to gather the substance of an assignment from the text. If this work has not been done, it is the duty of the teacher to train the pupils at whatever stage he finds them in school. It may be that pupils in the high school do not understand how to study a lesson from the text; if they do not, it is the duty of the teacher to make the beginning.

The chief place where the teacher is likely to feel the need first in school for ability to master an assignment from the text is in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades. But at all stages in school there is need of more or less assistance from the teacher to enable the pupils to study to the best advantage. This ability cannot be acquired by the pupils if the teacher merely assigns so many pages or paragraphs from day to day without comment. It does no good for the teacher to charge the pupils with indolence, lack of study, and poor preparation for the grade. This attitude is always harmful. What the pupils need is careful direction and training in sifting out the matter in the text so as to present it in their own words at the time of the recitation. Many pupils study the text too closely; they study isolated sentences and try to remember exact wording of sentences rather than to grasp the content of the topic or lesson as a whole. Pupils are inclined to read over the lesson instead of making a study of the various points of the lesson. The teacher must induce the pupils to study the separate paragraphs of the lesson by reading and



re-reading the same paragraphs until the substance of each is well fixed in the mind. The ability to do this requires time for the pupils and patience on the part of the teacher. A good method of procedure is to study the lesson with the pupils; the class should take the lesson up paragraph by paragraph and topic by topic under the direction of the teacher. The teacher should ask the pupils to watch for the leading thought as the paragraph is read aloud by one of the pupils. After one or two readings of the paragraph, let the pupils close their books and concentrate their thoughts on the meaning of the paragraph; different pupils should then be called upon to relate as completely as possible the thought of the paragraph studied. For many pupils this will be their first experience in reflection upon the content of the matter they have read. Daily practice of this character will remove a large part of the difficulty experienced by teachers in getting pupils to master the text.

Pupils need careful direction in the mastery of the text of every new subject even after they have acquired fair ability to gather the thought in subjects which they have studied for some time. It is often true that pupils in the second, third, and fourth grades may acquire the ability to gather quickly minute details from oral instruction and become unable to gather much more simple matter from a written presentation in the text. The withdrawal of all oral presentation and the abrupt substitution of all presentation in the written form is too radical; if the teacher experiences

great difficulty in this respect he may supplement the plan suggested above by some oral presentation.

**Adapting the Text to the Pupils.** There are many common faults of texts; this is particularly true of books in arithmetic and mathematics books in general. Books often lack in concreteness, and the subject-matter is couched in terms unintelligible to the pupils. These difficulties, however, may be and often are well met by the teacher in the manner suggested above; but there is another general weakness of books which is more serious and which is seldom overcome by the inexperienced teacher. This weakness is the lack of proper gradation and the lack of organization of the subject-material in a form which renders the subject easily understood by the pupils. The material is often too difficult to be presented in the early stages of the development of the topic; the material is presented so rapidly that too many new elements come together; or insufficient material is presented to give the pupils a clear understanding of the several topics treated. The teacher must be quick to recognize the extent of these defects and must counteract the evils which are inevitable if they are left uncorrected. The tendency of the inexperienced teacher and of many other teachers is to follow the book exactly as it is written, to present the topics line by line in just the order given by the book. It often happens, especially in mathematics, that the introduction to the various units of instruction must be made apart from the book. There is often preparatory work which must be done

before pupils can begin the work outlined in the book. It is not infrequent to find the treatment so inadequate in the text that the pupils who are plunged into the text and compelled to gain their practice from it entirely are hopelessly confused.

A certain teacher was having trouble in instructing her fifth-grade class in arithmetic. They were studying multiplication and division of fractions. The whole subject was presented, with all the various types of problems, in three pages, and only twenty problems were included for practice. The teacher had difficulty in securing the solution of four problems a day from the pupils. Most of these were vaguely understood. She finally laid aside the book and began to present the work independent of the book. She explained to the pupils the simplest type of problem in multiplication of fractions and at once gave the pupils a list of similar problems to solve. The pupils solved fifty problems in the time they had been struggling half-heartedly to solve four problems. The teacher then presented another step in the process and followed it with practice problems with the results similar to those obtained from the first step. She continued from day to day until she had presented all the possible cases of multiplication and division of fractions. At every stage the pupils solved the problems quickly, accurately, and in great numbers. When the several types of problems had been covered, the teacher made an assignment from the book, and the pupils never stopped with the difficulties of a single problem.

Instances of this kind could be multiplied in great numbers to show the vast difference between the teacher who organizes her work systematically and logically and the teacher who follows her text blindly. This careful adaptation of the text to the pupils is not confined to arithmetic, but the need is apparent in all subjects in varying degrees.

The teacher should study the spirit of attack which is made by his class; if the work moves sluggishly, and if the pupils are vague in their statements, the teacher should look well to the organization of the subject-matter.

**Making the Assignment Definite.** The assignment should be entirely free from misinterpretation. When the pupils leave the class, every pupil should know very definitely just what is required in the preparation of the lesson. If several points are assigned, the pupils should take sufficient notes to enable them to follow the teacher's requirements. The teacher should never make an assignment to be prepared outside of the text unless he knows positively that the information is obtainable with the means at the command of the pupils. He should never ask his class as a whole to prepare outside work unless there is more than one source from which the required knowledge may be obtained. If there are thirty pupils or even ten pupils in a class and only one book from which the preparation can be made, it will be impossible for all or even a majority of the pupils to meet the requirement of the teacher. It is better in such instances to

make the assignment to one or two pupils and require them to give a report to the class; often a still better way is for the teacher to make the preparation and present the work to the class.

It is usually unprofitable to ask pupils to prepare a point by inquiring from some one. Almost all requests of this character spring from the impulse of the moment; the teacher has not planned to make the assignment in this manner. It is rarely true that the teacher even calls for the point the succeeding day. Some teachers get into the habit of saying, "Ask your father." The father perhaps knows less about the point than the child does. The mere request to "find out," "to look up," and "to ask somebody" are loose and careless ways to make assignments. The teacher should designate the very source and even the page of the book on which the desired information is to be had when assignments are made to pupils in the elementary school. This will save the pupils much time and will prevent inadequate preparation.

**Length of the Assignment.** It is very easy for the teacher to underestimate the time required for the pupils to accomplish a given assignment. The most careful and most experienced teacher blunders seriously at times in this respect. The more familiar the teacher becomes with the subject-matter the more likely he is to underestimate the difficulties of the learner. The tendency of teachers is to require more of their pupils than they themselves could do in the given time. The subject-matter is new to the pupils, and they are

unable to move along through the assignment without errors and without the necessity for delays in the preparation. The pupils in the preparation of written work are expected to prepare it in good form; this often means that the work must first be done and then rewritten. This requires much more time than to perform the work. The teacher will be greatly surprised if he takes an assignment of problems he has given, solves them himself, and then copies them in just as neat and careful a manner on another paper as he requires of his pupils to hand in for his inspection. He will find often that the time required by one who has a thorough knowledge of the work to be performed is double that which he has allowed his pupils in which to do the work. An excellent way to determine the amount of time required by the pupils to prepare an assignment of this character is to hold the watch and thus determine the number of minutes required for the pupils to accomplish a part of the work. From this result the teacher may estimate approximately the time required for the class to prepare the whole assignment.

A teacher, a normal graduate with four years of experience, was daily assigning her fourth-grade class in reading twenty words to look up in the dictionary. She complained to her superintendent about the poor work she was getting in reading. He visited her class to study the matter. The assignment of twenty words to pupils to look up in the dictionary and to write suitable definitions after them, seemed to him a heavy require-

ment for fourth-grade pupils in addition to an assignment for preparation in reading. At his suggestion the pupils were timed to determine the number of minutes required by the pupils to find a word in the dictionary, get a suitable meaning, and write the definition in the manner required by the teacher. The average time was found to be two and one-half minutes per word. The teacher was thus requiring her pupils to perform a task which necessitated fifty minutes, besides the regular reading assignment. The pupils were allowed on the program only thirty minutes in which to make their preparation in reading.

The unreasonableness of the teacher is sometimes augmented by adding penalties for the nonperformance of assignments like those given above. The failure of pupils to perform a given assignment is a strong indication under normal conditions that the teacher's lesson assignments lack proper adjustment to the time for preparation and to the capacity of the pupils. The teacher should habitually study his methods through the reaction of his pupils.

The tendency of the teacher is to assign by pages or some other measurable amounts. Some teachers are such slaves to this manner of assignment that they would assign lessons by the inch if books were printed on rolls of paper so that the ruler could be applied conveniently. It is just as reasonable to say "Take twelve inches more of the book," as it is to say, each day, "Take five more pages." Lessons vary in importance and difficulty from place to place in the

text. The teacher must take these variations into account when the assignments are made. Three pages of the text at one time may be a very large assignment, while at another time ten pages may require very little time in the preparation. The assignment should be even as to the time required to master it from day to day. A teacher who makes an assignment one day which requires only ten minutes to prepare it, and the next day sets a task for the pupil which requires four hours to prepare it entails a great loss of time, energy, and quality of work, not only in the subject under consideration, but in the other subjects as well.

#### QUESTIONS

1. Why is a proper assignment so important in teaching? What does the assignment reveal as regards the teacher's professional efficiency?

2. What preparation must the teacher make before he is able to make a proper assignment? Why is it especially difficult for an inexperienced teacher to make a proper assignment?

3. What preparation must the pupils have before an assignment can be made? To what extent may a teacher rely upon the explanations usually found in texts as a means of preparing pupils for the assignment? Suppose that the lesson to be assigned in arithmetic requires the solution of problems where a knowledge of telling the time by the clock is necessary. Explain in detail how the teacher should proceed under these conditions if the pupils are more or less unable to tell the time of day.

4. Show how time is wasted by making assignments to pupils before they are properly prepared to receive them.

5. How much and what kind of aid should be given pupils toward the preparation of an assignment? What is the effect



on a class if insufficient aid is given for the preparation of an assigned lesson?

6. How may pupils be trained to master an assignment made in the text? Why do pupils in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades have trouble in this respect? How should the transition from oral instruction in the lower grades to book study in the upper grades be made?

7. In what respect should the teacher adapt the text to the pupils? Point out common weaknesses in texts which render adaptation necessary.

8. In what respects should the assignment be definite? In what way should an assignment be made outside of the text if the supply of reference books is very limited?

9. How may the teacher estimate properly the length of the assignment? Why is it so easy, even for an experienced teacher, to make the assignment too long?

10. What are some of the indications of errors in the length of the assignment? What should guide the teacher in the length of the assignment?

11. Discuss the dangers of gauging the assignment by pages, number of problems, etc.

12. Show how an improper assignment in one class may affect adversely proper assignments made in other classes.

## CHAPTER IX

### EVERYDAY PROBLEMS IN INSTRUCTION

**The Question of Method.** Teachers are generally prone to place too much stress on the value of some particular method of instruction. There are often many good ways of accomplishing a given result in school. One frequently finds teachers believing so thoroughly in a particular way of procedure that they regard all other methods as useless or, perhaps, harmful. They instruct on the assumption that the method is perfect; when the results obtained are unsatisfactory, they charge it to the lack of capacity in the child. It may be that the teacher is successful with the given method; it may be that he has been less successful with other methods. However, the success or failure of a few teachers with a certain method does not brand that method or other methods as especially good or bad. There is far more difference in the way methods are manipulated than there is in the methods themselves. One frequently finds, for example, in the same system of schools two or more primary teachers instructing pupils to read by wholly different methods. Each of these teachers claims superior virtues for the particular method she uses. Each teacher can enumerate a long list of misfortunes which are sure to befall the pupils who are instructed by any other

method. When these pupils pass on to the upper grades, there is no perceptible difference in their ability to read which can be traced to the various methods by which they have learned to read.

There is no method which teaches itself; almost any method yields good results at the hand of its author or with a teacher who is skillful in applying it. The best method may prove a failure in the hands of a weak teacher.

**Some Definite Method Needed.** Every teacher, however, should have a settled policy of instruction in each subject. If the teacher is uncertain as to the manner of procedure to be followed in his instruction, he should inform himself by conferring with successful teachers of the subject. He will soon discover what is the usual method followed by recognized teachers. This is a safe plan for the teacher to adopt until he can improve upon the method or find something better. This method should be followed until the teacher has learned to apply it successfully. By close observation and the exercise of careful judgment, the teacher will soon be able to extend the application of the method to give it sufficient variety.

**Some Tests of a Good Method.** A good method usually (1) is simple, (2) is unspectacular, and (3) will not yield its best results in a day, a week, or a month. It may be that the best method of procedure does not become evident for two or three years. Pupils who are taught to write by the muscular movement do not show skill in writing at once. It may seem a

waste of time in the beginning and even for many weeks, but when the muscles are properly developed and used in writing, the pupils will write with an ease and a grace impossible where pupils laboriously draw the forms of the letters from a copy. It is easy to train pupils in a few weeks to make neat and well formed letters; a good primary teacher may teach beginners to do it well in a month or two, but the teacher who relies upon this method to teach writing in the upper grades is doomed to failure.

In primary reading the phonetic drills and the study of phonograms seems useless to the teacher who has not traveled the whole way with pupils learning to read; but, the teacher of experience who knows how to use these devices understands that the most economical use of time results from a thorough mastery of these fundamental principles of reading.

In music, the scale and voice drills, the study of the staff, notes, time, sharps and flats, rests, and many other things may seem dry and uninteresting; the pupils and the teacher would, perhaps, far more enjoy singing beautiful songs, but if the pupils are to obtain access to the great musical resources of the race, past, present, and future, they must become masters in some degree of the symbolism of music. This mastery cannot be acquired without careful work and study of some features of the subject that may be dry and uninteresting. Indeed, every subject of the curriculum has its unpleasant features, but they are necessary and vital. The teacher who attempts to escape this work

pauperizes his pupils educationally, instead of rendering them strong and self-supporting. Too often the teacher loses his way and makes weaklings of his pupils because he imagines there is some unique or spectacular process of teaching some very common and necessary facts.

No method should be held to be sacred; methods are means to an end; they exist for the child's interests, not the child's interests for the method. The teacher should be constantly on the alert for the results following his method; he should modify his method when the results following its application are unsatisfactory.

**Similarity of Treatment of Subjects.** There is an old fable which relates how an old man asked his strong sons at his death to break a bundle of sticks. Each in turn tried his strength upon them without avail. Finally, the weak old man took the bundle of sticks and after untying them, broke them one by one with ease, to the chagrin of his sons. The difficulties of many teachers have their origin in attempting to "break too many sticks" of instruction at once. To be successful in instruction, the teacher should analyze the subject-matter of instruction into simple parts or elements; he should then begin with the one of first importance among these; this should be carefully mastered before the next is attempted. Just how minute the process of analysis of the subject should be, must be determined by the ability of the individual class. A slow class always requires a unit of instruction involving few elements. The teacher who is

introducing the Six Per Cent Method to a class in arithmetic, should not attempt the whole process at the start; it would be well, perhaps, to give a lesson or two in finding the interest on one dollar at six per cent for any number of years and months; next, the teacher should teach the method of finding the interest on one dollar for any number of years, months, and days divisible by six, at six per cent. The final step in this phase of the subject should include the process of finding the interest on one dollar for any number of years, months, and days at six per cent. The pupils are now ready to solve problems which require the interest on any amount for any time at six per cent. The next step in the process should be finding what parts of six other numbers are which are commonly used in interest. The pupils will then be prepared to find the interest on any sum of money for any time at any per cent. If the several steps are presented together, confusion is inevitable.

**The Question of Interest.** Much has been said by educators regarding the need of interest in the subject of instruction. It is difficult to overestimate the importance of interest in the process of learning, but it is quite easy to misunderstand and misapply the doctrine. Some teachers make interest synonymous with entertainment; these teachers think they have not complied with their pedagogical duty until they have amused the children in each recitation. This practice often degenerates to the point of telling foolish stories or relating amusing personal expe-

riences to the pupils during a part of the recitation period. A teacher once explained her method of interesting her pupils in algebra; with an air of superiority she said she always began the recitation by telling the pupils of her travels abroad. "I never fail to gain their interest," she said. True, perhaps, but was the interest in algebra? There is no reason why a dog fight should not have commanded interest in the same way, and could be justified as a part of the algebra work as much as a discussion of one's experiences abroad. Interest in instruction is not to be confused with mere amusement or interest in irrelevant subjects. It is impossible and even undesirable if it were possible for the teacher to "sugar-coat" all the work of the school. There is some real work about almost everything in the school, if the work is properly done. Pupils need some training in the mastery of things which are not especially pleasurable. The sense of pleasure which comes to the pupil because he finds himself master of a difficulty is a reward he may learn to appreciate even more than mere amusement or superficial interest. This is the kind of reward he must be satisfied with in the activities of life after school.

**Relative Value of Subjects.** The relative value of subjects in a school curriculum is not so much a question of the preference of one subject over another as it is of the manner of treatment of the subjects. The educational value of a subject depends upon the manner in which it is taught. Much has been said

about the value of manual training and domestic science as educational material, but the value of these subjects does not reside in them independent of their treatment. They must cultivate concentration of attention, accuracy and carefulness of thinking, judgment and alertness, otherwise as educational material they are useless. Arithmetic, grammar, history, or any other subject may be made to yield large returns in the habits of thought, application, expression, and information if they are properly utilized by the teacher, or they may be of little value if improperly used. The attitude of mind developed by a study is the matter of chief concern to the teacher. Education is largely concerned with the development of correct attitudes on the part of the pupil. No school is likely to put its pupils in possession of sufficient facts to carry them far. Mere rules of procedure and short cuts to processes are of little value to the pupil when he is confronted with a practical problem for solution in life. He has by that time either forgotten the rule or he is unable to adapt the problem to the rule process he has learned at school.

A farmer who had learned his arithmetic by rule spent the greater part of the forenoon turning through his old text in arithmetic in his endeavor to find the rule for the solution of a practical problem. He was unable to find the rule which covered the case. He had sold his neighbor six acres of meadow, one side of which was along the public road. He wished to know how far he should measure into the meadow and draw



a line parallel to the road that he might include the amount sold next to the road. The width of the field measured in the road was eighty rods. His problem, of course, was to determine the width of a rectangle eighty rods long whose area is six acres. This is a simple problem, indeed, but it shows the worthlessness of a process taught by rule, and how helpless one is to apply to a practical problem a rule which has been learned mechanically.

There is nothing which distinguishes modern methods of procedure in and out of school more than the endeavor in all the affairs of life to discover the reason for things. At every point in school we must seek to discover reasons for processes if our knowledge is to be the most serviceable. The value of particular studies will, therefore, be determined by the manner in which they are taught in the school.

**Quantity Is Not Power.** Many teachers need to realize more fully that quantity in school work is not synonymous with power and proficiency. Some teachers attempt to make records in the amount of work done, a large number of pages or books read by a class. It is not the number of pages that is significant, but the kind of mental qualities developed. Pupils may read a single poem of a dozen stanzas and obtain vastly more benefit than they would from reading three hundred pages of a book if it has been done in a superficial manner. If the pupils in a reading class do not get more than the bare outline of a story, they are not greatly benefited. On the other hand, if

they are made to feel the sentiment of a selection and to experience the motive of the author, something of value has been acquired whether one or a hundred pages have been read. The pupil who is trained to reason out and to explain accurately and logically an exercise in arithmetic registers a growth far greater than he would by solving a score of such exercises by some "rule of thumb." It is, perhaps, of some value to know that New York and Chicago are the two largest cities in the United States, but it is of vastly greater importance to the pupils to analyze the fact into the contributing factors which have made them so.

**Experience the Basis of Learning.** The teacher's work must be based upon experience. More books are failures in the school because of ill adjustment to experience than for any other reason. More teachers fail from their inability to conform to the experience of the pupils than from any other cause. No book, perhaps, is perfectly adjusted to the life experiences of any class. The function of the teacher is to make this adjustment. The measure of the teacher's success is determined by the degree to which he can make this adjustment; the result of the adjustment is learning. The teacher should make every effort possible to supply pictures, models, and other illustrations which will aid in giving the pupils the necessary concrete basis for interpreting his instruction.

Children of indigent parents crave the moving-picture show because it furnishes them new experiences. Much of this experience is of service to the

teacher. Familiarity with the outside world is as necessary for the proper instruction of the child as are books and pencils. Often children see nothing of the great industrial activities of the world in which they live, except through the moving picture. Often the teacher discovers these impressions in the minds of his pupils when he attempts to talk to them about the affairs outside of the school. The world of motion and sound has until the advent of the moving picture and the phonograph been largely lost to the race. This world is as large and as instructive as the world of real objects. It is possible under modern conditions to preserve action and sound from age to age and to utilize them in instruction in the same way that we now attempt to use the model, the picture, and sculpture to convey to us conceptions of the material world. The great singers and other musical artists will leave with succeeding generations the result of their great accomplishments just as the great literary minds have left us their thoughts in the literatures of the world. The world of nature with all of its complicated and interesting movements of growth, the life in the depths of the sea, the secrets and savage ways of the animals of the jungle, the eruption of volcanoes, the great industrial processes, the ceremonies of state, and everything that constitutes the realm of action will soon be at the command of the teacher.

The need of this experience basis in instruction is the essence of the principle of apperception. It is fundamental to all learning. At every point of in-

struction the teacher must determine what particular experience is necessary in order to articulate the subject of instruction with the present mental content of the pupil. The application of the principle is older and wider than the school. One cannot read an article in the newspaper that does not make constant application of the principle. The arrangement of chapters in a text and the arrangement of the paragraphs in the chapters must conform to this fundamental principle. The principle is so general and so common in its application that it seems strange that the teacher needs to be cautioned about neglecting it in instruction; however, it is quite widely ignored among teachers.

**Presenting a New Topic.** The teacher should use great care in presenting a new topic to the class; he should be clear and specific in his explanations; he should set out the salient points and eliminate non-essentials. Some teachers include too much in their presentation; this leads to obscurity and confusion. The teacher should be as commonplace in his presentation as possible; he should avoid using obscure terms and expressions whose content can be understood only by special training in the subject. The teacher, in a word, should clothe the subject matter of his instruction in the language of his pupils in ordinary speech. It is a simple matter to introduce technical terms after the nature of the subject presented is understood.

**Forms and Illustrations.** The teacher, especially of young children, should use great care as to the

correctness of all forms placed before the pupils. It is a bad practice to illustrate how a thing should be by writing it on the board the way it should not be. If a pupil writes a word incorrectly, the teacher should not repeat the incorrect form in order to point out the error to the pupil; to do so would augment the very difficulty the teacher wishes to correct. Each time an incorrect form is repeated to the eye or ear the more strongly the mind is inclined to repeat the incorrect form. It is for this reason that the teacher should pronounce words correctly, use grammatical language, and free himself from other conspicuous faults.

The illustrations the teacher uses should be free from misinterpretation. Pupils are very literal in their interpretation of the teacher's statements. A certain teacher was endeavoring to make clear to her pupils the difference between the use of t-h-e-r-e and t-h-e-i-r. She said, "You use t-h-e-i-r when you own something." She then called for sentences to illustrate the two uses. A boy raised his hand and gave the following sentence: "T-h-e-i-r goes my horse." He was greatly disappointed and chagrined to find that his illustration was wrong, although it seemed to him to meet the requirements stated by the teacher.

**Irrelevant Illustrations.** The explanations and illustrations of the teacher should be true to conditions. The use of irrelevant and unnatural material confuses the pupils. Pupils who are perplexed in reading fractions, for example, are not helped by telling them that a boy has two names, Charles and Smith.

The pupils need the difficulty explained in arithmetical terms; any other explanation is likely to make a false impression and establish in the mind many erroneous associations of which the teacher has little knowledge, and it may require a long time to clear these errors from the pupil's mind.

The tendency to place intervening perceptions between the mind of the child and the subject is unpsychological, yet it is a common practice with many teachers. Some teachers of music confuse their pupils by drawing the keyboard of the piano above the staff in order to teach the letters of the lines and spaces. They draw lines from the keys to the corresponding letters of the staff. There is no possible advantage in a device of this character for pupils studying vocal music, and who have not, as is almost universally true in the early stages of musical instruction in the schools, a knowledge of the piano. Why a pupil should be able to learn to associate the letters of the lines and spaces of the staff less readily than he could learn to associate them with the keys of the piano and then transfer his associations to the staff, is difficult to comprehend.

**Testing the Content of the Mind.** At every stage of the teacher's work he must exercise great care to prevent erroneous conception on the part of the pupils. The content of the child mind is different from that of the teacher, and for this reason he is prone to interpret subject matter in a different manner; often a point will be so evident to the teacher that he will not think

it necessary to question the pupil regarding its meaning, but the conception of the pupil may be quite absurd. Almost every recitation reveals answers which show the need of careful questioning to determine the content of the pupils' minds resulting from the class instruction. A class was reading the poem, "Sing On, Blithe Bird," by William Motherwell; one of the pupils read the lines:

He will not fly; he knows full well,  
While chirping on that spray,  
I would not harm him for the world,  
Or interrupt his lay.

The teacher was about to pass the reading without questioning concerning the meaning, but she casually asked the question, "What do you think is meant by 'interrupt his lay'?" One of the best pupils of the class gave his opinion as follows: "I think the bird was old and was laying down on his nest, and he did not want to bother him." The idea of the bird singing had not entered his mind, and the use of laying for lying had not perplexed him in the least.

On another occasion the teacher of an intermediate class asked her pupils for the meaning of "income." A little girl volunteered to define the word by using it in a sentence. She said, "Mamma opened the door and *income* a cat." Illustrations similar to these could be multiplied indefinitely by any teacher of experience who has made it a practice to question pupils about the meaning of the subject-matter.

The tendency of children is to place greater reality into things than we realize; the child in early life has not learned to distinguish between idealities and realities. Failure to recognize this often leads to misconception in our attempts to instruct them. A little girl was living with her grandparents, who had taught her to say her prayer, "Lay me down," at night; for some reason she did not like the prayer and asked her aunt to teach her another prayer. "Just think," said she, "if I should die before I wake." Her aunt gave her another little prayer, which closed by asking God to bless mamma, brother, and sister, grandpa and grandma, and all of us. When the prayer was finished, the little girl whispered in her aunt's ear, "And what did God say?" The same tendency was shown by the pupils in a certain class in studying geography. The teacher was explaining to the pupils the movement of the earth around the sun. She told them how many miles the earth traveled on its course around the sun each year; to make the subject real she figured the movement out in miles per second, and told the pupils that they were moving through space at the enormous rate of eighteen miles per second. "I should think," said one pupil, "that when one jumped off the earth he would come down several miles away from the spot from which he jumped, but he lights in the same place." This is a legitimate question which demands a satisfactory answer.

This disposition to make real application to the world about us is the quality the teacher should



endeavor to keep alive and stimulate. Our methods with children frequently lead them to discount a large part of what we attempt to teach them, as fiction. There is no class of pupils so difficult to instruct as those who have formed the habit of thinking what the teacher says means something else.

**Reality in Instruction.** The teacher should avoid fanciful and unnatural means of instruction. There is nothing more conducive to clearness than dealing with things as they are. Some teachers imagine it is necessary, especially with small children, to weave a magic story about simple truths in order to teach them. Most of these fanciful creations tend to obscure the truth they are designed to teach. The pupils become confused and are unable either to distinguish what is true from what is fiction, or to see the application of the artificial tale to the subject of instruction. A teacher, for example, who wishes to instruct a class in the process of "borrowing" in arithmetic does not add to the understanding of the process by telling the pupil that certain families, Browns and Smiths, live in houses which are represented by the orders of units, tens, and hundreds. To have the pupil imagine that he goes to Smith's house to borrow an article which Smith does not possess and must himself go to Brown's to borrow that he may be able to make the loan, is to introduce complication and unreality where simplicity and truth should be employed. A device of this character is much more difficult for the pupil to comprehend than the truth is. It is another

case of the "remedy being more violent than the disease." Just what conception pupils instructed in this manner have of the subject of subtraction, and just what the value of the conception could be in their later work, is difficult to see. If the teacher is seeking a short cut, or if he is seeking interest, he could not improve on the method of presentation which shows the units, tens, and hundreds as they are. Teachers of arithmetic would be more successful if they used objective material more, material which is true to the nature of the process to be taught. A teacher who uses the blackboard to illustrate by drawing the nature of the process, never conveys the accuracy of impression that the teacher does who places material things before the class, or if possible, in the hands of each member of the class. A teacher who has difficulty in teaching cubic measure, will find most of his difficulties quickly disappearing if he brings before his class a quantity of small cubical blocks, and builds up the volume in order to show the relation of the volume of a solid to its dimensions. Real material should be used in carpeting, papering, shingling, insurance, stocks and bonds, and at every possible point.

The use of real things is not confined to arithmetic. The teacher in geography, physiology, history, and reading will find an abundance of opportunities to make his work more nearly true to life. The subject of physiology will take on new life if the teacher brings before his class material to illustrate many features of the subject which are mere names to the pupils. A

pupil who has not seen a nerve, a corpuscle, a capillary, and many other things easily shown a class, necessarily has a vague conception of them. Physiology is a subject intensely real, but as it is taught in many schools it is largely a matter of words and imagination.

The author once examined a small child who had been in school nine months. Figures were written on the board and the child was asked to tell what they were. The first figure was 6. The child said, "That's a pig's tail." The next figures was 4. "That's a soldier sitting on a chair." For 2 the answer was, "A duck swimming in a pond." For 0 the child said, "That's the egg of the duck." It was found that the child had been taught to make similar associations with every figure, and that no mention had been made of the true name of the character. A test on the letters of the alphabet revealed artificial associations with many of them. All this was possible from a teacher who was teaching her twelfth year of school. Why should a pupil be thus instructed who is able to name hundreds of objects, actions, and qualities by their correct names without error and without injury to himself?

No less objectionable are certain schemes of teaching phonics which lead the pupil to associate the phonetic sounds with animals or objects which produce them. There are no dumb brutes which give correct phonetic sounds; things in nature cannot be relied upon to convey them to pupils. Any attempt to make use of these devices only leads to confusion. A

sound, to be of value, must be accurate, otherwise it is harmful. A comparison of the illustrations of different systems shows that the sound produced by the same object varies with the authors of the systems. If the authors of systems themselves disagree as to the sound to be associated with given objects, why should the pupils be expected to agree on the proper sound? The teacher wishes the pupil to associate the true sound with the letter without first calling to mind the animal or other objective image. There is nothing lost by the teacher in giving the sound to the pupils direct from her own lips. In this manner they have learned all the language they know.

The principle here involved is illustrated by the use of the map in geography in a position contrary to the true one. The incorrect association is established, and no amount of explanation will correct the impression. This point has been tested many times by teachers who have been careful to explain the position of places as they are, but who have left the map hanging in the wrong position.

**The Conventional Form.** There is a tendency, especially among inexperienced teachers, to introduce unconventional forms in work. The pupils themselves are prone to form unconventional habits in the lower grades. Any primary teacher who will test her pupils at the board on the manner of making letters and figures will usually discover many awkward ways of making them. One frequently finds the pupils making 3's, 5's, 7's, and 9's from below upward. Left-

handed pupils need careful supervision to correct such awkward habits in written work.

The practice in long division of marking the figures brought down, or drawing lines from them to the point where they are used in the process is needless, and to correct the habit when it is once formed usually requires an effort. As a general principle, it is well for the teacher to avoid the introduction of practices which must be discarded. To call a word "an action word" does not simplify the difficulty for the pupil. Every pupil who comes to school uses many words more difficult than the correct term verb. When it is once used, it is not necessary to make a substitution later. Pupils must live in a conventional world of custom and usage; if they are to be understood, and if they are to understand others, they must conform in their use of symbols to conventional usage.

**Learning to Do by Doing.** One discovers quickly the inaccuracy of his knowledge as soon as he attempts to put it into use. The student of a foreign language may read quite readily simple sentences written in the language, but when he first attempts to write his own thoughts in the new language, he discovers at every turn his vague understanding of the rules governing the correct use of the language. He must read and re-read explanatory sections he was confident until then that he understood perfectly.

The teacher should constantly require his pupils to put into practice the principles and processes he teaches. He should endeavor even in the early

stages of his presentation of new processes to apply them to concrete problems. The teacher of chemistry, physics, and mathematics should apply each principle as it is taught before introducing another. In the experimental work in the elementary sciences, the teacher will be much more successful if he will require all pupils to perform personally all experiments. There are very few experiments which are listed "for the instructor," that cannot be safely performed by the pupils under careful direction. The pupil who performs his own experiment always has a better understanding of it, although he may perform it less skillfully than his instructor could. A teacher instructing a class in the use of quotation marks might, after a brief explanation, send the class to the board and ask each pupil to write a quotation as directed. When this is done and the punctuation and form of writing is observed, the teacher should give other examples. A few minutes devoted in this manner will impress the point much more quickly and deeply than would be possible by illustrations given by the teacher to the class as a whole. The pupil who is required to execute a process must give it stronger attention than one who is a mere listener; the pupil who executes has a motor association with the subject of instruction. These two elements in instruction are as important to the teacher as the auditory and the visual senses, yet many teachers are prone to disregard them. The teacher of arithmetic, algebra, or geometry may often clear up vague impressions resulting from

explanations of new processes by sending the pupils to the board and putting them to work at the kind of problems he has been explaining. The first solution or two will likely be slow for many of the class, but the principles of the process will be grasped quickly as the application is made, and soon the class works rapidly. Fifteen minutes spent in this manner in the recitation under the supervision of the teacher, where each pupil is at liberty to ask concerning the particular point that troubles him, will save many times the number of minutes the pupil will waste in aimless study of the assignment; besides, much time will be saved that would be required to clear up difficulties at the recitation on the subsequent day.

**Developing from the Class.** Some teachers are overcautious about telling pupils anything, because they think to do so violates a sacred principle of pedagogy. Rather than do this they resort to long, roundabout, fatiguing processes of development of a point which should be explained as clearly and briefly as possible. There are some points in instruction which do not lend themselves readily to the developing process. The teacher must be keen enough in his judgment to determine these. It may be impossible with the knowledge in possession of pupils at certain stages of their progress to develop to advantage a desired point. In such cases, the teacher should tell his pupils the point rather than waste time which may be more profitably used in other ways. A teacher in the early stages of word development in her

primary class often stops to develop an exceptional word and thus uses much valuable time which should be spent in reading. To spend five of the twenty minutes of a reading period in order that one pupil might be able to pronounce a word without being told, and when this expensive process would likely be required again in fifteen minutes for the same pupil to call the word, is certainly not an economic use of the recitation time. These processes of "development" often take the form of guessing. A pupil, for example, is unable to recognize WAGON. The teacher says, "What does your father's horse pull?" If it is winter, the pupil will likely answer, "Sleigh." "What else?" asks the teacher. "A buggy," responds the pupil. The third guess is likely to be correct. When the process of development is used, the teacher often errs by supposing that he has developed a point from the class when he has succeeded in getting the correct answer from only one or two pupils of the class. It is certainly very little better for one pupil of the class to tell all the others the point than it is for the teacher to tell the whole class. The teacher should watch his class carefully, and so present the subject-matter that the class as a unit may follow the instruction. The teacher may easily train his pupils to raise hands when the point is understood, and only when it is understood. He can estimate thus his own degree of success in his instruction, and he can add to his presentation until he has made the point clear to the class as a whole.



It is easy for the teacher in developing a point to fall into a mechanical habit of asking, "How many see?" "How many understand?" The pupils soon acquire the habit of raising their hands after each of these stereotyped questions, although they have understood nothing. The teacher should verify what the pupils "see" and "understand" by calling for statements of the point of the presentation. Pupils should be trained to withhold acknowledging they understand an explanation when they do not. The teacher needs to cultivate great patience in his explanations; he should never show irritation if asked again and again by the slower members of the class for enlightenment. His response should always be cheerful to these requests. If there are some who have unusual difficulty, he should give them a few minutes outside of the class time. There is nothing more deadening to a pupil's progress in school than to fall into the careless habit of passing over topics with a vague understanding of them. This indifferent attitude often characterizes pupils in their relations outside of the classroom.

**Concert Work.** There is a strong tendency among beginning teachers to resort to concert responses. The pupils seem to do better, but the appearance is deceptive. The close observer soon discovers that most of the pupils are mere repeaters all the time and that all the pupils are repeaters some of the time. Pupils may become so quick in their response that the class seems to respond as a unit.

There is no place where concert work is more deceptive than it is in music, where it seems indispensable. Without occasionally testing the pupils individually many pupils will often pass through one and sometimes several grades without knowing the simplest facts of the rudiments. It often happens, too, that they participate in the music exercise, singing both syllables and words, but their response is entirely reflected from their classmates. If the teacher requires these pupils to turn to a new selection, he will find them unable to recognize the key, and they will be unable either to name or sing the syllables.

In concert drills pupils may be led to make the most ridiculous statements when the leader for one cause or another makes a mistake. It is evident that there is no value in an exercise which is devoid of all thinking.

It is true that not all concert work is of this character; it may often be used to advantage by the teacher, but the teacher must use extreme care to avoid its objectionable features. If it is necessary to resort to concert work, the pupils should be given individual drills to see that no pupil is becoming a mere repeater.

Certain kinds of board work may be classed as concert work; the evils here assume a new form—copying. When a whole class is sent to the board, and all are given the same problem or other exercise, there is likely to be much copying. This is frequently done so slyly that the most experienced teacher cannot

detect it. Those who copy all of the neighbor's work are usually detected, but there are those who copy the especially difficult parts—the very parts they should not copy. It is usually best to divide the class into small groups by requiring the pupils to number up to three, or some other number, as they stand around the board. This plan separates pupils who have similar problems, and thus renders copying difficult or impossible.

**Proper Direction vs. Driving.** It is difficult to make progress in school when it is necessary to drive pupils to their tasks. The teacher whose pupils are habitually unprepared for their class work should look at once to himself. The tendency of most teachers is to attribute poor lessons to lack of study, waste of time, or mischief on the part of the pupils. The evidence may be sufficient to convict the pupils on these charges, but the teacher who studies the situation carefully and scientifically will often discover that lack of study, waste of time, and idleness are not causes in themselves, but they are results which follow naturally from poor instruction—instruction not in accord with the aptitudes and disposition of pupils of that particular age. A little different method of attack, a little change in the manner of preparation required may accomplish in a day what would be impossible by careful spying for idlers, threats, and punishments. It is a good practice to delay accusations against the pupils until the teacher has made a very careful study of himself, and has changed his

methods and requirements frequently in his attempt to locate the cause of the trouble. It may be taken as a pretty safe conclusion that pupils will prepare lessons to the teacher's entire satisfaction if he makes the proper adjustment of the work to their needs.

An inexperienced teacher had trouble with her third-grade class in spelling. She said they were the laziest pupils and the worst shirkers that could be found. They missed more than half of the words in each lesson, and it was necessary to detain them after school to have the lesson properly prepared. She was on the point of using the strap on some of the worst "shirkers" when she spoke to her superintendent about the matter. He questioned her about the amount of the assignment, how the lesson was studied in preparation, and the time devoted to the preparation. He discovered that the teacher told the pupils to "take ten words" and then waited until the class study was about over, and then merely pronounced the words. The teacher was advised to go over the lesson with the pupils when the assignment was made, have them spell aloud each word, test each pupil's ability to pronounce the words of the lesson, and to require the pupils to spend a part of the study period writing the words under the direction of the teacher. The suggestion was adopted, and the difficulty disappeared at once. There were very few words missed the rest of the twenty-nine weeks of school. Many of the pupils had missed words because they had studied mere letters without knowing the words they spelled. A

large part of the difficulty encountered by many teachers of spelling in the early years arises from the pupils not knowing the pronunciation of the words assigned. Other pupils do not "see straight." The definite order of the letters in the words is not clearly established. If the words are carefully written at the beginning of the lesson under the direction of the teacher, a large part of the difficulty from this source will disappear. The teacher should then require the pupils to spell over and over again the difficult words of each lesson at different times. He should be careful to master each lesson well because this is a good way to acquire a capacity for spelling. Brain cells grow with exercise in a given direction.

**Liking the Subject.** Every superintendent has observed that subjects vary in their degree of popularity among pupils with the character of the instruction. It may be that a teacher always has hard-working and enthusiastic pupils in some study, but has study-haters in other studies. In the former the pupils are always prepared and are anxious to recite; it is never necessary to scold them; and the class work is a joy for both teacher and pupils; they are glad when the recitation is called and are sorry when it is concluded; the poorest pupil in the class shows interest. In the latter, on the other hand, all these conditions are changed, often with the same pupils. The teacher must drive the pupils to their tasks; they dislike the study; they go to the class as a mere matter of duty and recite in the same spirit. They are glad when the

recitation is over, and rejoice at the close of the semester or at the end of the year. A teacher who has a class of the latter type should make all haste to find a teacher who knows how—because there are many who do know—to lead classes in that particular study so that all of the former attributes will be characteristic of the class. A teacher who knows how to stimulate interest and application in a study should be slow to adopt recommended “methods” of other teachers, unless he knows from actual observation that such teachers are accomplishing results superior to those which characterize his own work.

If one should go about from school to school, and if he could choose teachers who are uniformly successful in inspiring pupils in the various studies of the curriculum, and if these teachers so selected were placed in the same school so that each teacher did the thing she knew how to do, scoldings, keeping in, dislike of studies, and failures would largely disappear.

**Variation in Aptitudes.** From what has been said above, we should not overlook the fact that pupils differ in their natural ability for given branches of study. Some pupils, for example, find mathematics exceedingly difficult while other pupils may find it quite easy. Under these circumstances pupils will tend to like or dislike the study regardless of the quality of the teaching. It often happens that members of the same family are strong or weak in certain studies. One may find natural ability in Latin, science, art, history, or other lines where he

least expects to find it. But these cases are by no means general, and may be regarded as exceptions.

**Studying the Individual.** The teacher should study the needs of individual pupils. In some classes there are pupils who must be treated differently from the rank and file of the class, if they are to keep pace with their classes or even make satisfactory progress. In large systems of schools some of these pupils may be provided for in special classes, but under the most favorable conditions some pupils must have individual instruction. It is surprising how many pupils may be kept up to grade by a few minutes of individual instruction, who might otherwise fail. If a teacher has a pupil who is careless and inaccurate in written work, and if the pupil because of this habit misses words in spelling, or makes many errors in his written work, he should supervise for a few minutes each day some written work required of the pupil. A good way to do this is to send the pupil to the board and require him to write the work as the teacher may direct. The teacher should insist on carefulness and accuracy, requiring the pupil to repeat again and again the preparation of the task until it is satisfactory.

A child who has special difficulty in comprehending an explanation should be given aid outside of the class time. The explanation of the difficulty should be more detailed than is necessary in the regular class.

**Qualities Better than Knowledge.** The supreme object of the school is not to enable pupils to pass examinations, but to fit them to live useful lives.

These qualities may not be synonymous with the mastery of subject-matter of instruction. Perhaps nine-tenths of our mothers would be pronounced miserable failures by some standards of "measurement" or schemes of standardization set by some examining boards. But they had mastered, notwithstanding, the principles of right living. The school should cultivate sincerity and honesty of character and those stable attributes of personality which are the mainstay of good citizenship. Some of the practices one sees in vogue in some schools under the name of politeness and moral training seem well suited to training children in hypocrisy. Schooling children to perform mechanically certain acts of moral gymnastics is not training them morally. Teaching a child to respond naturally and in accordance with his best judgment is of more value than the parrot repetition of moral codes and forms.

**Beautiful but Useless.** The teacher must discriminate closely between values in the things he teaches. Some things are attractive, even beautiful, which are of no consequence. It is not sufficient that a thing be interesting; it is not sufficient that the teacher have special skill in teaching it; the test of its worth is its value to the pupils. Teachers are prone to introduce into their schools the things that appeal to them, with no thought of its value to the pupils. In a certain school the teacher was an expert at printing with a pen. She taught all her pupils to print; they spent thirty minutes each day laboriously



printing poetry or paragraphs from their readers. It is difficult for one to see of what value such an acquisition would be to the rank and file of pupils. The time could certainly have been spent at something more profitable.

In two small villages within ten miles of each other one of the superintendents traveled abroad; he forthwith proceeded to introduce French into his course of study. The other superintendent had interests in southern Texas and spent his summers there mingling with persons who spoke Spanish; he proceeded to introduce into his course work in Spanish. In an agricultural community so small that it is difficult to teach more than three years' work in the high school one can hardly justify the introduction of French and Spanish. These illustrations show to what extent the teacher may introduce into the school his own needs and desires instead of being controlled by the needs of the pupils for whose instruction he receives compensation.

**Form Does Not Determine Substance.** The mere repetition of forms must not blind the teacher to actual results. Using the forms employed by a successful teacher does not insure his results. It is a mistaken notion many teachers have that all they need is to see a successful teacher at work and adopt his forms. A teacher in a certain school thought she was teaching her pupils the muscular movement. She had her pupils begin the writing exercise by giving them certain directions, which were good if followed.

She then started by repeating "up and down, up and down, push, push, push; from the shoulder, from the shoulder, push, push, push," etc. It was evident to the initiated that she had been under the tuition of one of Palmer's experts for a few lessons. She was laboring then and had been from September to April under the impression that she was teaching the Palmer system of writing. Less than one-third of the pupils had anything that resembled remotely muscular movement. Short pencils were being used by several pupils in the class. All the evils of finger writing were to be found there.

**Holding What Is Taught.** It is one thing to teach a subject, and another matter to keep it fresh in the minds of the pupils until the impressions become sufficiently rooted to afford them a working knowledge of the subject taught. For this reason the teacher needs to call up again and again topics which have been previously studied. Repeated application of the salient points will fix them in the minds of the pupils. It is a good plan to use frequently a part of the recitation period for this purpose. If the teacher prefers, he can employ the whole recitation period at regular intervals for this "polishing" process. One period devoted to this purpose every two weeks would make a vast difference in the retentive powers of the pupils. This is an excellent manner in which to dispose of odds and ends of time near the close of a recitation period when everything has gone unusually well. The teacher of mathematics who gives his pupils frequent

practice on the work passed over has little difficulty about making application of old knowledge when new topics are presented. It is a law of nature that disuse leads to weakness and decay. A principle once learned should be put into practice and kept in practice in proportion to its importance. If a principle is taught and then neglected, the early impression grows obscure, and the pupils 'soon become unable to apply what but a few weeks since was very clear to them.

### QUESTIONS

1. To what extent is the teacher responsible for the success or failure of a given method of instruction? Discuss the virtues and the faults of three typical methods used in teaching pupils to read.

2. Why should the teacher have some definite method of instruction in each subject?

3. What are some of the tests of a good method? Give illustrations of good methods of instruction in penmanship, reading, and music.

4. Show that successful instruction requires a careful analysis of the unit of instruction into its simple elements. Illustrate this with the Six Per Cent Method. Give from arithmetic two other illustrations of this method of presenting a new topic.

5. Discriminate between interest and entertainment. What is the objection to irrelevant interest?

6. Upon what does the educational value of a subject depend? Illustrate this by examples taken from the several subjects of the curriculum.

7. Show that quantity is not synonymous with power and proficiency. Give illustrations of this point from reading, arithmetic, geography, history, and music.

8. Show that successful teaching must be based upon the experiences of the pupils. Why are some textbooks difficult to

## 158 PRACTICAL PROBLEMS OF THE SCHOOL

understand? Why does group instruction render it difficult to write a text that is perfectly adapted to a class?

9. Show the place of pictures, models, and illustrations in teaching. At what disadvantage is the child of indigent parents?

10. What is the special value of the moving picture and the phonograph in teaching?

11. What caution does the teacher need to exercise in presenting a new topic?

12. Show the importance of keeping correct forms and illustrations before the pupils.

13. Point out the danger in the use of irrelevant illustrations.

14. What is meant by "intervening perceptions"? What disadvantage arises from using them?

15. Illustrate fully the necessity of testing the pupils regarding their understanding of the lesson.

16. Why should the teacher make his instruction conform to reality? Show how this is frequently violated. Illustrate the difference in the use of the concrete and the abstract in arithmetic, history, geography, and physiology.

17. Discuss the importance of conformity to conventional form in teaching. Give illustrations to show the need of frequent testing of pupils regarding their conformity to convention.

18. Give three or four examples from the chief subjects taught in school to show how the principle, "Learning to do by doing," may be applied.

19. Show under what circumstances a teacher often wastes time in attempting to develop processes in the recitation. Illustrate some of the faulty and worthless methods of development used by teachers. How may the teacher know that the class, instead of a few pupils, are following his attempt to instruct by the process of development?

20. What are the objections to concert work? Mention two or three kinds of concert work commonly seen in a school.

21. Show the difference between driving and directing in teaching. To what extent are idleness and faulty teaching related?

22. Show how the character of the instruction determines the attitude of the pupils toward a subject. To what extent do you think failures are due to unskillful teaching?

23. Illustrate the differences in aptitudes of pupils.

24. In what way should the teacher attempt to reach special pupils of the class?

25. Mention some qualities in a school that are better than knowledge.

26. Give some tests of the value of the subject of instruction. How does the special interest of the teacher often influence the subject-matter of instruction?

27. Show how a teacher may have the form of a method but not its content.

28. How may the teacher assist pupils in the power of retention? Illustrate how the odds and ends of time may be profitably used.

## CHAPTER X

### CONDUCTING THE RECITATION

**Purpose of the Recitation.** The recitation serves many purposes in the school if it is utilized to the fullest extent. It is unfortunate that it serves only one purpose in many schools—to hear pupils recite. The amount and the quality of the work done in a school is, for the most part, determined by the character of the work done from day to day in the recitation. At this time the teacher presents new subject-matter to the pupils; he knits together the separate topics of instruction into systematic structures; he determines the character of the progress of each individual pupil; he stimulates the faltering pupils; he eradicates error before it becomes deeply rooted; and he establishes an exchange and a clearing house where the needs of each pupil may be promptly met.

**Recitation Should Have a Plan.** If the recitation is to serve its purposes, it must have a definite plan; the plan and purpose for each day must be carefully arranged by the teacher. The beginning teacher finds it necessary to give a great deal of time to lesson-planning, and the experienced teacher is required to adapt old plans to new classes. Without a plan the recitation is left to chance; it turns this way and that instead of moving toward a definite goal. In such a

recitation small questions or mere incidents turn the current of thought into foreign channels and waste the time. It is evident, therefore, that the recitation cannot be left to the pupils for guidance. They do not have the necessary perspective of the subject, and to be a skilled teacher without knowledge is unthinkable. The plan of the recitation should be in evidence from the very beginning; it is usually a bad indication to see a teacher begin a recitation with the question, "Children, what would you like to do today?" (On one occasion, when this question was asked, a little boy turned to another and said, "Let's you and me fight!") The absurdity of this mode of procedure is apparent when we think that a child on the impulse of the moment is entrusted with the important task of designating offhand what course the recitation should follow. The choice, when it is made, is rarely more than the desire of one or two pupils. The pupil who makes the selection is not often the one who needs special opportunity for self-expression. The motives which prompt pupils to choose certain selections in preference to others are not those which should guide the teacher in his direction of the recitation. One pupil may make a certain choice in order to be the first to choose; another may make "going to the board" the basis of his selection. Selections are often made because they are easy. It is seldom that pupils choose things upon which they need special drill. The choice is very frequently the kind of exercise least needed by any member of the class.

Older pupils frequently take advantage of the teacher who attempts to conduct his recitation without definite plans, by asking questions designed to lead the teacher away from the assigned lesson. The pupils for some reason are not prepared and they seek to shield their ignorance by directing the attention of the teacher to other things. They know the teacher's failing; when the recitation begins, they lead him off on an excursion and flatter him with an assumed interest while he elaborates some point entirely remote from the subject of study.

**Springing Surprises.** The pupils should know the plan of the recitation at the time the lesson is assigned. They should know definitely what preparation is necessary to prepare the lesson to meet the requirements of the recitation the following day. If the teacher finds his pupils unprepared on the salient points of the lesson because they have devoted their time to minor features in the assignment, there has been some mistake on his part in planning the recitation. It is disappointing to pupils to prepare a lesson and find, when the recitation is called, that the points studied are of little importance. Some teachers intentionally conceal the subtle points of the lesson when it is assigned in order to spring them as surprises the next day. The function of the teacher does not lie in concealing difficulties but in revealing the place of their existence.

**Use of the Text in the Recitation.** The organization of the recitation renders it difficult to use the



average text in exactly the order in which the matter is presented for the recitation. The text of necessity must present the subject-matter in detail in order to develop general principles and larger conceptions of the topics treated. The teacher must have this larger view of the lesson before he can conduct the recitation to advantage. He should, if possible, master the lesson in the text so well before the recitation is called, that he can direct the lesson without reference to the text. If the teacher is unfamiliar with the lesson, if he has comprehended only the isolated parts of the lesson, and has failed to unite them into a systematic unit, he must confine his recitation work to scrappy fragments of matter taken from parts of paragraphs. It is impossible to ask a question which reaches deeply into the subject-matter unless the teacher has mastered the lesson in its entirety. The question should be the focus of a discussion; it should be a large topic under which may be grouped one or more smaller topics. It is impossible to conduct the recitation in this manner unless the teacher knows the lesson so well that he can dispense very largely with the use of the text in the conduct of the recitation.

**Fragmentary Teaching.** The systematic organization of the subject-matter of the text enables the teacher to avoid fragmentary teaching; it enables him to connect the successive steps of instruction from lesson to lesson into larger and larger units. There is very little profit in a study which is taught and recited

one paragraph at a time without reference to the unit of instruction of which the topic is a part. If this relating and connecting process is kept up from day to day, there will be little danger of pupils "forgetting" within a few days after a topic has been studied.

The teacher should have a clear conception of the fundamental principles and topics of every subject he teaches. His one aim should be to fix these in the minds of his pupils by constant repetition and application. In mathematics, for example, there are processes which are vital in each year's work. These processes are taught separately, and in many instances are put aside for a similar treatment of another process. Each process needs to be called up and applied at frequent intervals in order to prevent sluggishness in their use when they are needed. In algebra there are fundamental processes which must be kept constantly before the pupils as they move along from week to week. The methods of factoring, removal of parenthesis, formation of equations, fractional exponents, and other processes must be practiced even after they have been given special study, until they are thoroughly fixed in the mind. In the study of a language there is special need for these recurring exercises on the paradigm forms; the first impressions grow dim in a few weeks unless they are brought back again and again into consciousness. It requires only a few minutes each day or each week to brighten these impressions, but it requires a great deal of time to explain them anew after they have been forgotten. Some teachers use to

advantage special lesson periods at stated intervals for this general "rounding-up" work. The need for work of this character is apparent in every study in school. Let the teacher decide in his own mind what these important things are in spelling, geography, history, arithmetic, grammar, reading, music, and writing. The various studies in the high school may be analyzed in the same manner. The teacher who will take the trouble to arrange these salient features of his studies in definite form and who will then keep up a systematic attack through recurrence to them from time to time through the year, will not be disappointed, as he often is, with the results of his written examinations at the close of the semester.

**Overworking the Bright Pupil.** There is a strong tendency in the recitation for the teacher to overwork the stronger pupils of the class and underwork the slower pupils. There are many devices commonly used by teachers which are confined in their operation almost entirely to the stronger pupils. An illustration of devices of this character is the following, generally used by elementary teachers of arithmetic: The teacher begins the exercise by saying, "I am thinking of two numbers whose product is 24." The pupils raise their hands, and one pupil guesses the correct numbers whose product is 24. This pupil then steps to the front of the room and gives a similar problem, perhaps two numbers whose product is 36. The pupils raise their hands and the pupil designates one pupil to give his guess which is, perhaps, "Is it 9 times 4?"

"No, it is not 9 times 4," replies the questioner. He now designates another pupil to give his guess, which may be, "Is it 6 times 6?" "No, it is not 6 times 6," comes the stereotyped answer. "Is it 3 times 12?" asks another. "No, it is not 3 times 12," comes the reply, and so the process is carried on until the correct numbers are guessed, whereupon the questioner replies, "Yes, it is blank times blank." Then the lucky guesser tries the class with a problem of his own choosing. All this time, of course, no pupil is called upon except those who raise their hands; this confines the work to the pupils who are strongest in this kind of work and neglects entirely those who are weakest. The time consumed by the mechanical repetition of "Is it blank times blank," and "No, it is not blank times blank," is sufficient to condemn it as a drill exercise, if for no other reason. A better device for drill should accomplish twenty times as much work and engage all the pupils. There are several devices for drills on the tables which save this enormous waste of time and apply to all the pupils. One of these is the cylinder by means of which the numbers may be revolved quickly in systematic combinations before the pupils. The numbers are sometimes placed upon cards and used as a teacher would employ drill cards. A good device is to draw a circle and write the digits from one to ten around the margin. A digit is placed in the center of the circle; this figure is considered the multiplier. The pupils are called upon to name the products in order around the circle. If the numbers around

the margin are 3, 6, 4, 8, 9, 2, 0, 7, 1, 3, 5, 7, 2, 8, 9 etc., and the number in the center is 6, the pupil names the products in order, thus: 18, 36, 24, 48, 54, etc., until another is asked by the teacher to continue. All the pupils must follow the order that they may be able to take up the work when designated. All the pupils must engage in the exercise, and a great amount of work is done in a short time.

The old practice of "spelling down" is objectionable because the stronger pupils secure almost all the benefit. There is, perhaps, some value in spelling familiar words, but the value is slight as compared with that obtained from the study of words whose spelling has been learned only recently. The words which need repetition by all the pupils are the words they have recently missed in their written work or their regular spelling lessons.

Some devices in reading give the stronger pupils the chief benefit. One of these practices consists in refusing to permit a pupil to read after he has made a mistake. The very pupils who need the extra practice and those who are most likely to commit some error before they have read more than a line or two, are deprived of their normal share of reading, and those who have little need for extra practice and who may read several paragraphs without error receive more than their normal amount of reading. Besides, this method places the emphasis in the wrong place in reading. Slight errors in pronunciation, inflection, and miscalling of words is preferable to mechanically

perfect reading without expression. The injunction, "Read until you make a mistake," places undue stress upon the mechanical part and at the same time overworks the stronger members of the class.

The extensive use of the volunteer recitation is objectionable because it, too, limits participation in the recitation to a small group of pupils who are the stronger members of the class. Pupils who are less aggressive should be urged and encouraged to participate in the recitation. It is the chief means of stimulating their interest in the recitation, and it is the best way to give them greater strength.

**Working All the Pupils.** It is a difficult art to work all the pupils of a class to the same degree of intensity throughout the recitation. The degree, however, to which a teacher does this is a fair standard of his efficiency. When one or more pupils in a recitation lose contact with the line of thought, they cease to be benefited by the class work; the evil effect of this condition is exactly the same as that which results from absence from school—the pupil is absent mentally. How to keep this mental presence of all the pupils in the recitation is one of the greatest problems of the teacher. Some teachers seem to give little concern about the class as a whole. They confine their attention to the few who are able to follow the line of instruction. This unity of attention for which the teacher must strive, results from his method of conducting his recitation.

In a certain class of seventh-grade pupils in reading the teacher began the recitation with a question about the content of the lesson. Seven of the twenty-eight pupils raised their hands. The remaining twenty-one pupils failed to grasp the meaning of the question or to recall the answer to the question. The trained observer would at once conclude that those who raised their hands were the strongest pupils of the class. The teacher seemed not to notice that his question had reached only a small number of the class. No attempt was made to modify the question or to bring into the circle of thought a larger proportion of the class. Throughout the recitation there was very little response from any of the pupils except the original seven who responded to the first question. Some of these pupils recited several times, and one of the seven recited six times during the period. Three-fourths of the class were ignored for the one-fourth, and these former pupils were evidently the members of the class who needed most the stimulus which comes from participation in the recitation. The teacher needs to measure his questions and his mode of procedure at every point to determine how nearly he is reaching all the members of the class. A lesson which is improperly mastered, or an examination which a majority of the class fail to pass, shows ill-adjustment on the part of the teacher to the needs of the pupils. It is certainly a poor species of economy which leads the teacher to move along with his recitation day after day and week after week with only a small fraction of the pupils being reached by his instruction.

**Profiting through Doing.** Pupils gain power and interest in class work through doing; "Learn to do by doing" is an old principle in education. No amount of work done by the teacher for the pupils and no amount of work done by one pupil for another can take the place of work done by each pupil for himself. The teacher should avoid at all times methods and exercises which fail to call out the activities of the class as a whole. The teacher and the pupils themselves rarely know how vaguely principles and processes are understood until they attempt to put them into execution. Teachers constantly assume the burden of school activities and stay the progress of the pupils instead of developing the pupils' strength gradually through larger and larger participation. It requires careful thought for the teacher to do just enough and not too much to enable the pupils to assist themselves. When a new study is taken up by a class, a great deal of help is necessary from the teacher, but each day he should permit the pupils to try their powers just a little more. If he is skillful in making this delicate adjustment of the problem to the capacity of the pupils, their independence should become greater and greater as the time devoted to the study increases. The teacher must analyze his methods in each study in order to detect practices which result in doing work for the pupils instead of developing power in them to do it without the teacher's assistance. It is easy for the teacher to be deceived as to the efficacy of the practice of "pulling pupils out" of difficulties. The



class work moves along so much better, the teacher thinks.

There is no place where the teacher may do more harm by giving too much assistance than in conducting an exercise in music. The teacher is convinced that "results" are the supreme test of the wisdom of the practice he pursues, but he fails to apply the proper test for the real results which follow the practice. If he stands before his class and sings constantly with his pupils, it is not long until the selection is learned, and the pupils all sing it readily. If he had thrown the pupils upon their own responsibility, it would have taken much longer to teach the selection. Would this not be convincing proof that the teacher should sing with the pupils? But the deception arises here because the apparent results are widely different from the real results. What has really happened is that the pupils have learned the lesson through imitation—by rote, as we say. They have not made any gain in power to read music; with the next lesson, and the next, and the next, and so on, they will have the same difficulty. The effect is comparable to that which would result from reading over and over a selection with a pupil before asking him to read it alone; he would soon be able to read the selection with this assistance from the teacher, but he would gain independence in reading very slowly. The practice of beating the time so that the beats are audible to the pupils is an evil as great as that resulting from singing with them. If the pupils are to acquire the ability

to do this independent of the teacher, they must begin to do it in the early stages of their music work, and be required to continue it throughout their work. The result at the end of their work in music will be sufficiently conspicuous to convince the teacher of the fallacy of doing the work for the pupils.

An illustration of the evil resulting from the practice of doing music work for the pupils was related to the author recently by a supervisor of music for the publishers of one of the most widely used systems in the schools. The superintendent of the schools and the regular supervisor of music were very proud of the work they were doing in music. They were anxious to have the general supervisor conduct the music exercise while she was in their city; this, of course, she was glad to do. She began the exercise by asking the pupils to sing for her some of the selections they had been studying during the year. All of these they sang very well. She then searched for a selection which they had not seen in order to test their reading power and their general independence. At last one was found; she gave them the pitch and the time movement and started them; before they had passed the third measure they broke down. The pupils turned instinctively to the leader, but she shook her head, and said to them, "This is not my proposition; this is your task." Again and again they attempted to sing the selection without the aid of the teacher, but each time they broke down before they had sung a line. Out of this class of one hundred pupils, for that was the number in the chorus,

not a pupil had acquired sufficient independence to do his work without following the teacher as a kind of bellwether. The results stand in sharp contrast here with those obtained by another supervisor of high standing among music supervisors. Three hundred of his pupils sang so well at a great educational gathering that he was questioned about their independence. After all, some thought, his pupils had been trained to sing so well because of special drill in a few exercises. His answer to the question was an actual test before the audience on a selection for sight work. A committee of music teachers provided him with copies of their own choosing; the pupils were assembled on the stage and were then handed the music leaflets. The director gave them the pitch and the time movement, and started them; he then folded his arms and walked out of the room and waited until the pupils had finished the selection. He then returned and informed them that although they had kept together and had carried the parts through, they had made a few errors which he hoped they would eliminate in the next trial; he pointed out the errors made in singing certain accidentals, and started them through again, but did not sing for them or keep the time for them. With the second trial the pupils sang the selection entirely through by syllable without making a mistake. The director now asked them to take the words, which they did with the ease of professionals. This is power which results from being required to do.

The principle under consideration might be illustrated from any study in school. In arithmetic, especially, there is at times danger of unwise assistance being given. When a pupil begins his explanation of a problem, the teacher may assist him with the different steps, and the explanation seems to be very well given, but let the teacher require the pupil to begin the explanation again after he has been assisted, or take up a similar problem, and he may require about as much assistance as before. Until the pupil can reason his course through without aid from the teacher, he has not comprehended the process fully.

The teacher of reading in the lower grades often permits pupils to pronounce words for the reader, much to his disadvantage. The pupils have no incentive to prepare themselves on difficult words when they will be piped into their ears as soon as they are needed. One often hears a performance similar to the following: The pupil begins to read, "Once upon a time—time—long, long ago, there lived two ('brothers') brothers. One was rich and one was poor. ('Christmas eve') Christmas eve came and the poor ('brother') brother had no ('meat') meat nor ('bread') bread in his ('house') house. He went to the rich ('brother') brother and asked for ('something') something to eat." A little systematic word study would relieve the necessity for this worthless mode of procedure. No benefit can come to the pupil who merely repeats a word after some one else.

In a general way it may be said that the teacher in conducting his recitation must seek to keep his pupils

active in doing the work for themselves in as large a manner as possible. He should endeavor to have every pupil recite every day in every subject, and recite as much as possible of the whole assignment. If some pupils must be excused from reciting because of the size of the class, they should be the stronger pupils. One of the best ways to make a weak pupil strong in his work, or at least stronger, is to keep him active in doing the work required in the recitation. Without repeated attempts at reciting a weak pupil becomes gradually weaker until he loses completely the possibility of doing the work required. The tendency is very strong for the teacher to neglect the weaker pupils and to give the major part of the recitation work to the stronger pupils. The recitation work under these conditions moves along more smoothly and shows better, but the actual good accomplished for the class is much less than it is in the recitation where the teacher requires participation on the part of all the pupils.

**Wasteful Methods.** It is possible to employ methods in the conduct of the recitation which attempt to secure a general participation on the part of the pupils, but which consume a large amount of time in proportion to the work accomplished, and at the same time engage each pupil very little. A teacher, for example, attempts a class solution of a problem in United States money. He asks a pupil to step to the board and write \$5.08; a second pupil follows and writes \$16.25; a third writes \$1.38; a fourth draws the

line; a fifth adds the first column; a sixth adds the second column, and so on, until the problem is solved; it is, then, pointed off by one pupil, and the answer is read by another pupil. This method of procedure is a great waste of time; there is more time consumed by pupils in passing to the board and back to their seats than is required to solve many problems of this character. The plan employs only a part of the class, and each pupil does an insignificant part of the work. All the work could be accomplished by all the pupils by sending the class to the board, where each pupil could solve the entire problem under the direction of the teacher.

**Talking the Time Away.** One of the commonest ways of losing time in the school is through talking; this loss usually arises from the tendency of the teacher to sidetrack to things which are remote from the aim and purpose of the recitation. A certain teacher of several years' experience was at a loss to explain why her pupils in the third grade were unable to accomplish the amount of work regularly done by the pupils of her friend, who spent less time on reading than she did. She asked for a careful inspection of her method to discover the cause of the difference. Her pupils were just as capable as those of her friend, her discipline was just as good, and her pupils were just as studious. A single observation of one of her typical recitations in reading revealed at once the cause of the difference. One quite harmless appearing practice was the seat of the whole trouble. She called her class in reading,

and the pupils began to read a simple story about water. The first sentence was: "If you have skated on a pond you know what ice is." The reading was stopped at this point for a series of questions and discussions which served no real purpose in teaching pupils to read. "How many of you know what a pond is?" asked the teacher. "What is the difference between a pond and a lake?" "What lakes have you seen?" "Name some other lakes you have heard about." "What is ice?" "Why does ice float?" "What other substance besides water expands when it freezes?" "Why does a pitcher break when water freezes in it?" These and other questions were put to the class after the first sentence was read, and each was followed by much questioning and long discussion. This plan was followed throughout the recitation. At the close of the recitation ten lines had been read by the pupils, and only three pupils of the twenty of the class had been called upon to read. The work done by the teacher might have been pronounced good for nature study, but as a reading exercise it was almost worthless. Instead of this elaborate questioning and indefinite leading into other fields, the teacher who had produced better readers in less time than the teacher in question, used the time of the recitation for reading. She questioned her pupils only when she was in doubt whether they understood the content; there was no questioning about words and content which all the pupils understood. She kept her pupils reading day after day; when the lesson was finished, they read it

again; then they read old lessons again and again. Her pupils grew in power from day to day, and they read new matter with less and less difficulty. After all is said about methods in reading, pupils learn to read by reading, and any plan or device which dispenses with active participation in reading by all of the pupils will be found to be unsatisfactory.

**Dramatization.** Dramatization gives reality to reading and develops natural expression; but owing to the great need of practice in reading, the teacher who attempts to dramatize every selection fails to develop fluent readers; in the presence of new subject-matter the pupils invariably show unfamiliarity with the mechanics of reading. The teacher must exercise great care in the use of dramatization, that she does not weaken her pupils through loss of practice in reading. Almost every diversion in school has its dangers; an attempt to develop pupils in one way may be at the expense of some other quality of equal importance. Everywhere the teacher must use judgment that her work may not become unbalanced.

**Nature of Criticism.** The recitation period affords the teacher an opportunity to correct errors which follow all attempts at learning and execution of processes. For this reason the teacher is necessarily a critic, but he should not be a mere faultfinder. His criticism should be designed to aid the pupil to a better understanding of difficulties and should always be given in a kindly spirit. Any other kind of criticism defeats the purpose of criticism and tends to destroy



the good resulting from the recitation. Ridicule is the least profitable of all criticism; its effect is almost entirely harmful. No pupil should feel that his recitation is likely to be the basis of ridicule. It is only natural that some answers of pupils should be wrong; some of them may be amusing. The teacher cheapens himself and humiliates the pupil by turning the answer the pupil gives, so as to render him a subject of laughter for the other members of the class. Pupils may become so accustomed to seeing the "funny side" that they are unable to do substantial thinking. When a pupil is asked to respond to a question, he should feel free to give his answer as it occurs to him; this answer should be taken in good faith by the teacher and criticized in a sensible manner. If the pupil's impressions are wrong, they should be given in order that they may be corrected. A pupil who is habitually ridiculed is likely to hesitate to give his full opinion when he may have one worth giving; he will often say that he does not know when he does, but is afraid to trust his judgment. This withdrawal from free participation in the recitation leads to indifference toward the recitation, the subject, and all school work in general. A pupil who loses faith in himself, who loses interest in a study, and who begins to lose interest in school as a desirable place to be is in danger of losing the battle altogether. Criticism, then, should seek to stimulate the pupil, to encourage him, to give him faith in himself, and to point out error only to the extent of helping the pupil. In order to serve this

purpose it may often be necessary to withhold much criticism that could be given. A little criticism definitely directed toward a common error and one that is fundamental, is much more profitable than a general criticism of both important and unimportant points.

**Wrong Kinds of Criticism.** There are forms of criticism which consume much time but fail to enlighten because they are of the wrong character. One of these consists in reducing the answer of the pupil to an absurdity. A teacher may show the absurdity of an answer but fail utterly to show the pupil wherein he has made the error. A pupil may solve a problem involving the purchase of coal and obtain an answer showing that the price per ton is twenty-five cents. It does not assist the pupil to discover his error to say, "I'd like for you to buy coal for me." "What firm is selling coal at that price?" All criticism of this character is harmful because it diverts the mind from the serious side of the problem, promotes self-consciousness, and develops timidity in pupils, who are already too cautious in the matter of self-expression. The simple question, "Does your answer seem reasonable?" serves every purpose that the teacher desires to accomplish by the other mode of attack. A pupil who arrives at a wrong conclusion should be required to give the steps of his solution in order that he may be led to discover his own error, or at least to enable the teacher to discover the cause of his error that he may correct it. If the pupil has failed to comprehend

the principle involved in the solution, the teacher has erred in his presentation. The only thing that will help in this instance is a further explanation of the principle, a harking back to the concrete basis, to furnish the pupil a foundation for his thinking. The response of the pupil should furnish the teacher a standard for measurement of his instruction.

Exhibiting error in written work is criticism of the wrong kind. It is very humiliating to most children to have their mistakes and defects made conspicuous. The practice of selecting the poorest paper in an exercise, and holding it before the school with the usual comment should be universally condemned when it is impossible to conceal the identity of the author. Pupils do not profit by showing them examples of work as it should not be. In this instance the best example of inefficient work is shown. A pupil who has made a reasonable effort to accomplish an assigned task has discharged his obligation, regardless of the results following the effort. This does not mean that a pupil is not to be criticized; the objection is made to the form of the criticism because it makes the defect of the pupil too conspicuous, and it attempts to correct error by exhibiting error. Work exhibited to the school should be the best specimen obtainable from the class; this is an attainable standard and the exhibition of it will be an adequate reward for the successful pupil.

Criticism should be directed toward vital things. A criticism in reading, for example, which points out

the omission of a word, a repetition of a phrase, holding the book too high or too low, standing on one foot, reading too fast or too slow, letting the voice fall or keeping it up, and the like, is directed at minor things. These points should receive attention, but they should not be made the center of class attention. A pupil may become so sensitive to these mechanical features that he is unfitted to read with thoughtfulness and expression.

Scolding is a poor attempt to criticize. To scold a pupil because he cannot see a point, or because his answer is wrong, is to stop the flow of his mental current in the desired direction and to unfit him for doing his normal grade of thinking. A pupil under stress from the teacher gives answers more and more ridiculous until he gives the most absurd answers to the simplest questions.

**The Evil of Entertaining.** The recitation period is not a time for entertaining the pupils. School work need not be entertaining in order to be interesting. The work of the school has a fascination if it is understood by the pupils. The "drudgery" some teachers get from the regular work arises from poor teaching. Number work has been frequently spoken of as the "drudgery" of the school in the primary grades, but there are many teachers whose pupils are always interested in it; they will stop the preparation of other work to prepare the number work unless the teacher conceals it with a curtain until the allotted time for study.

Some of the work of the school which is most essential must be accomplished even though it be uninteresting. Elaborate attempts to make such work entertaining and to remove from it all traces of difficulty are likely to degenerate into exercises of little value—mere “stunt work.” Some authors of texts have erred so greatly along these lines that they have failed to give an adequate treatment of the subject. Arithmetic and grammar have been heavy losers at times by this dilute treatment of the subjects. Pupils have grown weaker from year to year by studying books of this type in spite of longer terms of school and better qualified teachers. In primary reading it often happens that much time is wasted endeavoring to avoid something which is imagined to be distasteful to the pupils, when a direct attempt to meet the difficulty would be much more interesting to the pupils and would lead to a mastery of the difficulty in less time.

**Effect of Praise.** Praise judiciously used may be a stimulus and incentive to effort in the recitation. It is doubtful if one gets too old to appreciate recognition for well-doing. A pupil who has struggled hard to master a difficulty feels a sense of pride when he is commended by his teacher for his effort. To say to a pupil or a class, “That was well done; you have done better than I expected with that difficult task,” when it is true, is to send the pupil or class to the next task with an enthusiasm and a determination to do their best.

**Other Incentives.** Material rewards of intrinsic value are not so commonly used by teachers now as they were in earlier years. It used to be quite common for teachers to give money to the best speller in each class. A quarter or half dollar was pierced near the edge and a string attached so that it could be worn from day to day by various pupils who received the "head-mark" on the various days. The pupil who wore the coin home the greatest number of times during the term of school was given the money at the close of school. It always happens in such cases that only a very limited number of the class, perhaps two, have any chance of winning; for the rest of the class the reward fails to accomplish its purpose. With the pupils who are affected the stimulus is of the wrong kind; the interest is transferred from the subject of study to the reward. These pupils are likely to develop "anti-social" traits which more than counter-balance the good resulting from the reward.

Some teachers rely upon the grade as the stimulus for the recitation. It is doubtful if very low grading has any desirable effect upon indifferent pupils. It certainly has a disastrous effect upon the slow pupil. The teacher who is a chronic low grader is seldom successful with pupils of medium ability or those easily discouraged. The teacher is primarily a helper; he should watch his class closely to see what pupils are falling below a fair average. Instead of trying to compel his weaker pupils to greater effort by severe grading, he should counsel with them to learn the

reason for their slow progress. If he does this, he will find many pupils who are struggling hard to keep up, and who need only some assistance from him to bring them to a good standard of work. If he adds an extra discouragement by giving them an extremely low grade, they lose heart and quit trying. Some pupils are slow in grasping a new subject, but do well after a few weeks. The teacher who overlooks this and gives a pupil a grade of 20 for the month almost determines at the outset the impossibility of the pupil making a passing grade for the semester. Suppose the average for passing a study is 75; if a pupil is graded 20 for one month and should make a grade of 85 for each succeeding month, it would require five and one-half months to reach the passing average. It is always best not to pass too stern a judgment at the outset in a study; the second or third months may show strength where it was not manifested at the outset. Kindly assistance freely given at the proper time will do much toward transforming a failing pupil to a first-class one.

Again, there is much damage done by some teachers who give high grades for poor work; such grading gives pupils a false conception of their ability and usually leads to a low grade of application. The teacher should hold a high standard for his pupils; he should not try to grade them up to the standard, but he should train them up to the standard. The teacher will usually get the class of recitation work he accepts; if he is satisfied with nothing but the best, and if he

strives daily for this ideal, showing his pupils where they have fallen short of the ideal, and if he adjusts the length of the lesson to his requirements, he will soon have his highest expectations realized.

**Mannerisms.** Both teachers and pupils are prone to fall into certain unnatural schoolroom habits. They serve no purpose in the school, besides they, in many instances, are harmful. One of the commonest of these evil practices is that of repeating the answers of pupils. Something akin to the following occurs in the recitation: "What are we studying today?" "The noun." "Yes, the noun; what kind of noun?" "Proper." "Yes, proper; what is a proper noun?" "Name of a place." "Yes, name of a place. How many kinds of nouns?" "Two." "Yes, two; what are they?" "Common and proper." "Yes, common and proper."

The repetition of stereotyped phrases is a fault of many teachers. Habits of this character are easily acquired. It is meaningless and monotonous to hear a teacher repeat over and over, "all right," "that's good," "yes, I see," "how many see?" "do you understand?" etc., etc., while conducting the recitation. This habit is rendered still more monotonous by a continuous nodding of the head when the pupil is reciting correctly and shaking it when he is reciting incorrectly. The beginning teacher especially must be on his guard continually against acquiring some of these conspicuous habits.

The "yelling habit" is prevalent among beginning teachers. One may often hear a teacher from the



hall or an adjacent room talking at the top of his voice. The tone of voice should rarely be louder than that used in common speech. There are no advantages in favor of loud tones in the schoolroom. They are unpleasant, distracting, and conducive to noise in the room. They frequently develop unnatural tones on the part of the pupils through attempts to imitate the teacher.

### QUESTIONS

1. What are the chief purposes of the recitation? Discuss the necessity of a definite plan in the recitation.

2. Show the danger of leaving the guidance of the recitation to the pupils.

3. Analyze the cause of aimless wandering in the recitation. Why do pupils at times study the less important features of an assignment to the neglect of the important matter?

4. Why should the teacher be as free as possible from the use of the text when conducting the recitation? Show the importance of a thorough mastery of the lesson by the teacher.

5. In what way may a teacher avoid fragmentary teaching? What plan should a teacher follow in order to fix firmly the salient features of the subjects taught?

6. Give several examples illustrating ways in which the bright pupil is overworked.

7. Show in what manner the teacher should seek to bring all of the class into the circle of thought in the recitation.

8. Explain the value of participation in the recitation. What are the steps by which pupils gain power to comprehend and express thought? Illustrate these steps with reference to the teaching of music.

9. Explain the evil of talking the time away. How does this arise in reading, history, and geography?

10. Distinguish between criticism and faultfinding. Give the chief objection to ridicule as a form of criticism. What

## 188 PRACTICAL PROBLEMS OF THE SCHOOL

should be the attitude of the teacher in the recitation in order to cultivate free expression of opinion by the pupils in the class? What is the highest purpose in criticism? To what extent should criticism be withheld?

11. Show the fallacy of attempting to criticize a pupil by reducing his answer to an absurdity. Give three other examples of common but wrong kinds of criticism.

12. What are some of the evils arising from attempts to make the work of the school entertaining? Show how poor teaching may cause pupils to look upon certain work of the school as drudgery. Give illustrations to show that pupils are more interested in real work than they are in "stunt work."

13. Show the effect of genuine praise on the spirit and enthusiasm of pupils.

14. Point out the chief objections to extremely low grading. What is the effect of giving high grades for poor work?

15. Give five illustrations of mannerisms commonly found in school.

## CHAPTER XI

### EXCEPTIONS TO THE RULE

THE problems of the teacher would be greatly simplified and reduced in number if they could be classified under definite rules without exceptions. Unfortunately there are many pupils who depart so far from the rank and file in the school that they require special treatment at the hands of the teacher. In large systems of schools it is possible to remove some of these cases from the care of the regular teacher by placing them in schools specially provided for them; but a large number of teachers must still provide for them to the best of their ability.

**The Unpromising Child.** It is difficult to tell the future of a child by his appearance and by his struggles as they are encountered by the teacher in the school-room. Often a pupil may lack promise who may distance in the future those with the brightest outlook. It is not the teacher's to pass judgment, but his only to fashion from the material at his command. If he puts into his efforts his best thought, the future will hold in store many delightful surprises. Before him may be a boy of little apparent ability; he may be industrious and honest to a fault. As the days and weeks go by, his tenacity of purpose adds strength and clearness to his thought until he emerges into the

activities of life capable of discharging his duties as befits the best citizen of the community. There are many changes which occur in the lives of children between entrance and graduation from school; each child is a law unto himself.

Years ago in London there was born a child who had little promise; his birthplace was over an old stable. Sir Humphry Davy was directed to him; he gave him advice sufficient to start his thought into new channels. In after years Tyndall characterized him as the greatest experimental philosopher the world had ever seen. Later in life Davy was asked to mention the greatest discovery he ever made; his answer was, "Michael Faraday."

Not all unpromising pupils will become philosophers; many of them may not become desirable citizens, but they are a part of the teacher's problem, and their future happiness is often largely in his hands. These pupils frequently come from homes where the most elementary assistance from the parents is hopelessly impossible. The teacher stands as the only means by which such a pupil may receive a common school education; the possession of it may mean the difference between living in comfort by self-support and living as a public charge. Often these cases may be reached only by more or less sacrifice on the part of the teacher.

**The Discouraged Pupil.** Pupils vary as much in characteristics as do adults. Some pupils are easily discouraged and need careful attention from the

teacher to keep them in a spirit to accomplish their work. To such pupils the tasks of the school seem at times insurmountable. In these moments of discouragement resolutions are formed which often result in withdrawal from school. The following example illustrates the nature of the problem: A boy came to his teacher one morning and said, "I believe I'll quit school." The teacher was surprised at the declaration and pressed the pupil for the reason. Finally, with considerable hesitation, he said, "I just can't get that algebra." He added further, "I never was very good at mathematics." The teacher told him he was mistaken about the subject being unusually difficult; that he should come to him for assistance. The gloom was not dispelled and the pupil was losing courage more and more. He was then asked by the teacher to confer with him every morning before school until he was excused. The pupil came morning after morning and worked his algebra under the direct supervision of his teacher. All the points which gave him trouble were explained. After two weeks, the pupil confessed that the subject is not so difficult as it first appears; but he continued to do special work with his teacher, who was anxious to encourage and to help him. At the end of a month the boy was excused from doing this special work, but was urged to seek assistance in the same way in the future if it was necessary. No further special aid was necessary, but at the close of the year his grade was the highest in the class. This pupil finished his high school course and

later graduated from college. It is easy from these facts to estimate the value of the aid given to this pupil at the critical time at which it was given. It is plain that this slight difficulty stood in the way of further advancement in school. The pupil owes his graduation from high school and college to the teacher who was wise enough to meet a practical difficulty in a practical manner. This teacher lost very few pupils from his high school, because he was keenly sensitive to the needs of his pupils, and he spared no pains to give assistance when it was needed.

**The Timid Pupil.** Timidity manifests itself in different ways among pupils; often the teacher may construe it as an exhibition of impertinence. Timidity is frequent among pupils of excellent ability. The teacher needs to exercise great care in such cases to remove the handicap. The chief need of the pupil is confidence in himself. This is gained only by the performance of tasks at the request of the teacher. The teacher should begin by making simple requests; these should require little more than the statement of a single sentence; the number of requests should be increased and the difficulty gradually increased. All the errors of the pupil should be minimized or entirely disregarded. The assignment of a very difficult task to the pupil, or the administration of severe reproof, may be the means of neutralizing the accomplishment of weeks.

A teacher who interprets the conduct of a pupil as a manifestation of impertinence or laziness when it

is the result of timidity commits an almost irreparable blunder by administering a severe reproof. The next time the pupil attempts to recite his conduct will be still more suspicious; if this is met by another reproof, it is quite likely that the teacher will be unable to secure even an attempt to respond to his requests.

**The Slow Pupil.** Every year when school opens, every teacher finds one or more pupils who are slow in learning. No set of investigations has yet told us how to deal with all of these cases. It is not a matter of adenoids in all cases; it is not a matter of defective senses, undernourishment, nervousness, or other physical defects; it is not a matter of poor instruction in the former grade. There is something in the heredity that we do not comprehend which renders learning from books difficult, and no device of correlation with handwork or anything else solves the problem. It is very discouraging for these pupils to be confronted day by day with these difficult school tasks unless they have a teacher filled with a genuine spirit of helpfulness. These slow pupils are often the very "salt of the earth." They may have the finest qualities of heart; be honest to a fault, careful, industrious, and conscientious. Often they are quick and reliable in learning to perform tasks in the shop or field. Some boys at twelve may learn to read or comprehend arithmetic with the utmost difficulty, but be the equal of a man in doing the tasks assigned them by their father on the farm. Pupils with these qualities must be taught through individual exercises adapted

to their needs. The teacher must study these cases carefully and pile illustration upon illustration, and repeat many times the same subject-matter in slightly different forms until difficulties are grasped. In cases like these the teacher will need ample knowledge of the science of teaching and a wealth of experience in the art of instruction. It is a fine accomplishment to understand a machine so well that one can set it in motion and cause it to perform its function effectively, but it is a much finer accomplishment to be able to touch a sluggish intellect and enable it to perform the marvelous process of mental growth. The most unprofessional thing the teacher can do is to "kill off" these pupils by letting them fail year after year without trying to reach them. Discarding as unfit and worthless has been the process in the crude and ignorant stages of all sciences. In dentistry all aching teeth were extracted; in surgery all injured limbs were amputated. Once it was proper to expose the weak child that it might die young; today we hesitate to pass judgment as to who the weak are, until they have had a chance to live and grow. The schools in recent years have been educating a large number of children who were formerly given up as hopeless; this has resulted from a better knowledge of the principles of teaching and from a new attitude on the part of the teacher toward his work. The teacher no longer attempts to discharge his obligation by saying, "I never advise such pupils to attempt to secure an education."



Some pupils are slow who may not be permanently slow in learning. With extra help they may overcome their difficulties and make rapid progress. Difficulties in learning increase with the period of neglect and often diminish rapidly under special aid. It behooves the teacher to begin early to strengthen those who show unusual weakness in their work. In most instances, however, it is necessary for the teacher to give such pupils some attention outside of the regular class. A pupil in the lower grades who manifests a weakness in his reading will often gain material strength by being required to read each lesson to his teacher before or after school hours. Pupils who are troubled with mathematics should go over the lesson with the teacher before it is studied, in order that all special difficulties may be explained. A little systematic help given in due time frequently saves many failures in the classes. A pupil in spelling may have difficulty who, if properly directed, may soon overcome his weakness entirely.

**The Pupil of Quick Temper.** The teacher often encounters pupils of uncontrollable tempers; this is especially true in dealing with older pupils. These pupils are impulsive and reckless when angry. Mere incidents in the school may, with an impulsive and quick-tempered teacher, develop into serious encounters. A little care and tact will enable the teacher to avoid all such troubles. The teacher must be calm and deliberate; nothing must be done under the stress of the moment. Each time this weakness of the pupil

is called out it becomes stronger and the longer it remains inactive the greater the stress required to display it. Sometimes the pupil is the least responsible for possessing the disagreeable trait; inheritance and unwise parental management have led to this inevitable result.

**Pupils with Nervous Affliction.** A pupil with nervous disorder may be the teacher's chief annoyance in the school. These disorders may at times manifest themselves in misconduct; the teacher who misunderstands the case attempts to eliminate the difficulty through the infliction of punishment. This only contributes to the evil. A conference with the parent should be had in such cases, that the advice of a physician may be obtained. It is often well to isolate the pupil if possible; if this is not possible, the pupil should receive careful attention as to seating in the room. Special arrangements for rest periods and recreation in the open air contribute much to the management of such pupils. If the pupil lives near the school, it is advisable to permit the pupil to attend his recitations and return home in order to be relieved as much as possible from the strain incident to the schoolroom. The pupil may be permitted to omit to advantage some studies of lesser importance; this arrangement may enable the pupil to hold his place in the grades until the disorder has been in a measure corrected. The regulations of the school should always be sufficiently elastic to enable every pupil to obtain whatever benefit his physical con-

dition will warrant, although this may sometimes be small.

**The Child of the Poor.** There exists in almost every school one or more pupils who are embarrassed from lack of sufficient means to enable them to obtain supplies; of all pupils in the school this type of pupil needs most the advantages of an education. In most states the laws make some provision whereby supplies may be furnished at public expense. Where this is not possible, a little effort on the part of the teacher will enable him to supply the pupil at little cost; often books may be borrowed or purchased from other pupils at little expense. In all cases, the pupil should be supplied with as little publicity as possible. Those who have had experience with many cases of this type have not failed to observe that such pupils are in many instances extremely sensitive as to their dependence; to have it generally known is to them humiliating in the extreme. It is this sensitiveness that impels them to become self-supporting; by publicity this sensitiveness is blunted, and substantial aid is thus given toward the production of public charges.

**The Untidy Pupil.** The only remedy in some cases in school is direct attention to the child on the part of the teacher; a pupil who comes to school without washing day after day should be required to attend to the matter regularly at school. It often happens in such cases that it is a waste of time to attempt to induce the parent to give the pupil the proper care at home; parents whose ideals have so far decayed are

not capable of stimulus by the ordinary methods available to the teacher; to exclude the pupil from school, would punish the child for the sins of the parents, and would frequently be the one chief thing desired by them. In the case of very small pupils the teacher should not hesitate to prepare the child personally. Bathing is an unknown experience to such pupils until it is provided at school by the teacher.

The prevalence of lice is common among neglected pupils; a few applications of the tincture of larkspur with a shampoo will free the pupil from objection. In all these cases the pupil should be taught to apply the remedies of the teacher if he is able to do so. There is no lesson the teacher can give a pupil which is of greater value than that of cleanliness; it is at the basis of good health, and it is fundamental to the progress of the pupil in school. Without cleanliness one is unsought for every class of labor except that of the very lowest grade.

**The Incurable Pupil.** It is easy to theorize regarding the question of "no incurable children," but theories leave facts undisturbed; the teacher may meet in his work occasionally a pupil whose presence in the school should not be tolerated; to do so would be poor economy and disastrous to the best interest of the school. The public school by its nature cannot serve the function of a penal institution or a reformatory. Much has been said against turning a boy or girl out to ruin, but it is far better to allow one pupil to go all the way to ruin than to permit, by means of

his presence, twenty pupils to go one-fifth of the way to ruin.

The power of expelling a pupil lies with the board of education; the teacher should not assume this power, because of the possibility of his decision being reversed by the board. It is always best to await the action of the board in the case of incorrigible pupils; if they deem it best, they may condition the pupil by demanding his conformance to the requirements of the school under penalty of dismissal; it often happens in such cases that the pupil will withdraw on his own accord. Rather than obey regulations some pupils prefer to drop out of school. It would certainly be unwise to purchase attendance of a pupil at the price of insubordination.

**Lacking in Capacity.** The teacher may offset in a measure by special care many of the weaknesses and disadvantages of pupils, but he meets at times a pupil who is lacking in capacity. The teacher, at best, can only direct and develop the pupil as he is; he cannot supply the brain with additional substance. There is much in the nature of every child that his teacher is in no way to be held responsible for; the rapid progress of some pupils and the slow progress of many others are due to qualities beyond the power of the teacher. A pupil who is so far below the normal child that he cannot be instructed with even a fair degree of success in the common schools, should be sent to an institution especially equipped to supply his needs; to continue such a child in school for a long period and require

him to repeat the work of the grade is misleading to his parents and deprives the pupil of an education suited to his needs.

**The Dreamer.** One of the most elusive cases encountered by the teacher is the pure dreamer; this type of pupil may escape detection for a time unless the teacher is extremely alert. He is seldom guilty of any violation of discipline; he is quiet in the study period and always assumes the attitude of study, looking intently at his book—but he never studies. His mind is intent upon something foreign to school tasks. A pupil who is regarded as studious and who does not accomplish in a fair degree the work assigned, should be carefully observed during the study period to see if his study is real or merely pretended. This is easily determined by noting carefully whether the pupil looks at the same page in his book or occasionally turns the leaf. If the pupil is informed that one who studies rarely finds all the assignment on one page, he will add the formality of turning the page to render the deception more complete, but he will not devote any more time to study.

A pupil who is contracting the habit of neglect of duty should be held strictly responsible for definite results. If he comes to the recitation unprepared, he should be held for further preparation until his work is acceptable to the teacher. The habit of musing results in mental degeneration. It should be broken at once.

**The Left-Handed Pupil.** Left-handed pupils are found in almost every school. It is not advisable to

attempt to teach such pupils to use the right hand in writing, drawing, cutting, and other work of the school. But the left-handed pupil needs careful attention to prevent the formation of awkward habits in the use of the pen and pencil. The fact that a pupil is left-handed should not serve as an excuse for bad position and evil habits in writing. There is a strong tendency among left-handed pupils to write with the hand above the line rather than below, as is common with right-handed pupils. This fault should be corrected; the position used by right-handed pupils should be required for the pupils who are left-handed. Left-handed pupils are inclined to write a backhand. Careful attention on the part of the teacher who insists upon the proper slant will correct the fault. If necessary, the teacher should have the pupil write under his supervision until the tendency to backhand is completely overcome.

#### QUESTIONS

1. What rewards often follow giving to the unpromising pupil the very best possible attention?
2. Show how discouragement may lead to withdrawal from school. How should this problem be met by the teachers?
3. How does timidity often manifest itself among pupils? At what age is timidity common among pupils? How may the teacher stimulate confidence in the pupil?
4. How should the teacher deal with the slow pupil? Mention two or three types of slow pupils.
5. What caution should be exercised in the management of the pupil of quick and violent temper?
6. Explain in detail how a pupil with nervous affliction should be provided for.

## 202 PRACTICAL PROBLEMS OF THE SCHOOL

7. In what respects should the teacher use great care in his treatment of the child of the poor?

8. What should be the attitude of the teacher toward untidiness in pupils? What legal powers has the teacher in extreme cases? What powers has a board of health in these cases?

9. How and under what conditions should a pupil be expelled from school?

10. What course should the teacher pursue in the case where a pupil is lacking in mentality? How may the teacher be sure that his diagnosis in such cases is correct?

11. Give the characteristics of "dreamers." How may the teacher detect such pupils in his school? Give a proper method of treatment for these cases.

12. What special tendencies should be corrected in left-handed pupils?



## CHAPTER XII

### THE TEACHER

THE teacher needs a great variety of knowledge, but there is none which influences his work more than a proper knowledge of himself, and a thorough understanding of those qualities which determine his success.

**The Teacher's Work Difficult.** Teaching is a very difficult science and an art which requires peculiar skill. The teacher deals with the least known of all subjects of study—the human mind and spirit. It is with this intangible something, which acts and develops in accordance with law, that the teacher must work. This growth is influenced by countless multitudes that have lived and died in the scores of preceding centuries; the growth is influenced by many elements in the daily life of the pupils which are neither directly nor indirectly under his control. The teacher has in his school all the elements of social life about him; he has those of high motives and those of low ones; he has those of good influence and those with the very worst. Centered in every schoolroom are children whose ancestors could be traced to almost every country, race, and condition of life. These composite forces must be directed in some manner by the teacher that they may bring forth good fruit. We often speak about the complexity of the physical organism; the

most skilled scientist knows scarcely more than a trace of its mysteries, yet it is simple as compared with thought, impulses, feelings, ambitions, and character.

The teacher's task includes more than mere instruction in book lore. Today one of the school citizens has been waylaid and beaten by thugs; tomorrow a theft or robbery has been committed; then, a case of slander or personal abuse. In all these cases the teacher must act as attorney for both sides, discharge the function of judge and jury, and finally act as chief executioner. If one thinks this is easy at all times, it is quite evident he has never experienced some of the perplexities some teachers have encountered. When the power of recall is often lodged in the hands of the interested parties, one realizes how delicate the task of the teacher may become.

**The Teacher the Chief Element.** The teacher is the greatest of all the elements of the school; he is greater than the school board, greater than school equipment, the community, and the curriculum. It matters little what one studies in school if the teacher possesses superior qualities of scholarship and personality; if the teacher does not possess these, little of profit will result from his instruction.

The school is to a great extent a reflection of the teacher. The experienced eye can detect in a few minutes of observation the qualities of the teacher by observing the reaction these qualities have produced in the pupils. These are so apparent in some schools that they may be recognized in the conduct of the

pupils before they reach the teacher's room after being called in from play.

**Balance Needed in the Teacher.** The teacher should be free from eccentricities. The schoolroom is not a suitable place for extremists and freaks. The teacher should cultivate breadth of view; he should train himself to look at all sides of a question with one aim in view—to find the truth. He should value truth higher than preconceived doctrines and dogmas; his convictions should be subject to change in the light of new facts. The teacher of this state of mind is likely to see much that is reasonable and plausible in the views of others, although they may be different from his.

The teacher may find much in the political life of the country to form convictions quite extreme and opposite in their nature. One set of facts might cause him to be a pessimist; to advocate extreme measures of reform. By looking into the question more deeply he will gather much to temper these views.

**Neither Too Much Work nor Too Much Play.** There are usually two kinds of people in every community. One devotes too much time to sports and the other devotes too much time to work. The teacher should avoid either extreme. He has too much work employing his time to be the leading spirit in all the amusements of the community; he should be first in the educational activities even if he must occasionally be second or third in some other matters. The relations of the teacher are such that he must be

known, and he must know the people in his community; in order to do this he must frequently leave his home in the evening and identify himself with the social affairs of his community. The teacher needs this practical touch with the life about him to do his best work.

**Balance as to Dress.** The dress of the teacher should avoid extremes; it is expected of the teacher that he be clean and neat in dress, but not extravagant. The teacher who dresses for school as he would for a party becomes at once conspicuous and is the subject of ridicule. This attitude toward dress gives the public the impression that the teacher lacks judgment; that he is out of harmony with practical things. On the other hand, the teacher who is careless about dress, who wears tattered or soiled garments, is regarded as below the standard demanded by his profession. Poor dress is associated in the minds of many with low culture and poor breeding.

**Sanity in Religion.** The teacher needs to avoid extremes in all things, but in no other respect does he need to exercise greater care than in his religious views. Common observation as well as history shows that persons will practice and resort to the greatest indiscretions under certain forms of religious convictions. This does not mean that the teacher should be lukewarm in his convictions; it does not mean that he is to withhold definite expression along religious lines. Indeed, the teacher should have his convictions and have the courage to defend them; but he should

recognize that his duty as a public servant in the school does not carry with it the responsibility of converting his pupils to his religious views, during school hours at least. He is the teacher of all the children of every shade of religious conviction; to use school time to force his own views upon the children of those who have employed him for another purpose is distinctly a misuse of school time.

It may be urged by some that there is need of greater conviction among teachers along religious lines to change the "godless" condition now existing in the schools. The criticism here suggested arises because of a misconception of the nature of Christian character. There is little criticism that is directed against the personal qualities and ideals of the teacher; the chief objection is raised against the lack of formal religious instruction in the schools. Such instruction, if attempted, would be of little consequence, and under the conditions existing in our schools would be impossible under the limitations which would of necessity be imposed on it. The teacher exerts his influence for good to the extent of what he is, more than by what he teaches in a formal manner. There are opportunities in almost every recitation where the teacher may instruct in reverence for God more effectively than in any formal exercise especially designed for the purpose. The teacher exerts his influence for God or Satan whether he holds in his hand a Bible or a spelling book.

**The Teacher a Student of Himself.** One needs to be a close observer and student of himself. He should

be quick to discover his weaknesses that they may be corrected. The railroad train which makes a long trip across the country stops at intervals to be inspected to detect the flaws and to see if it may safely pursue its journey; so the teacher on his professional tour needs to inspect the stability of his views that he may detect evidences of weakness and correct them. There is no better way to carry on this examination and inspection of self than to read good educational literature and associate with those of high standing in the profession; and there is no quicker way to start professional decay and head for speedy wreckage than to break contact with these influences. Every profession, education at present more than any other, is constantly undergoing changes and readjustments; the teacher who ceases to weigh the evidence presented constantly on educational problems soon becomes hopelessly out of harmony with the trend of thought and practice in his profession.

The chief objection against the teacher of much experience has its foundation here; there is nothing in the nature of teaching which should not give a distinct advantage to the teacher of mature experience who has followed and practiced the recent doctrines of his profession.

**Adaptability of the Teacher.** The teacher who changes his location must adapt himself to his community; it may be the ideals of the people in school matters are distinctly below even a fair standard.

Reformation is sometimes a slow process, and the teacher cannot raise the standard of education higher than the normal growth of the people of his district along educational lines. He should proceed to cultivate a better sentiment by the best and most effective means. It is useless to attempt to make progress in this direction through faultfinding and coercion of those in authority. Men are usually amenable to reason, and the teacher who presents his demands in a clear, definite, and logical manner will get a reasonable degree of recognition. There is nothing men and women think more of than their children—all the talk about the supremacy of hogs, cattle, and “the Almighty Dollar” notwithstanding. They will make any provision necessary when convinced that it is greatly to their interest and welfare. Many teachers attempt to get desirable results in poor ways. Thus, they spend their own salary to supply some need about the school equipment. These practices tend often to perpetuate the very evil which makes them necessary. Those in authority soon form the conviction the school “will get along” if the request is not granted. A teacher who has succeeded in inducing a school board, which has pursued a tight-fisted policy, to make a single substantial purchase for the school, has taken a long step toward establishing a new and better policy in the management of school affairs in the future. School boards need to form the habit of making regular annual expenditures for equipment and improvements.

Results are desirable, but the greater need in many communities is a growth of new ideals and attitudes in the control of the schools.

**Being Too Sensitive.** It is possible to be too sensitive to gossip and current reports. A teacher rarely becomes so nearly perfect that some one will not find fault and assail him. Some of the sharpest criticism one receives is often the direct result of doing his duty. There are in most communities a small group of persons whose chief business seems to be "knocking the school." The teacher as a public servant may expect this as a normal part of his experiences. Humiliating things will be said about him and to him; some of these will be the direct result of pure malice, while others will originate from ignorance.

There are several classes of school cranks to be found in most communities; the teacher who goes about from place to place soon learns to expect them as a matter of course. Among these he may expect to find the spelling crank, the arithmetic crank, the corporal punishment crank, the overworking-the-children crank, the good-old-days crank, the we-need-it-in-the-course crank, and several other varieties. Most of these are comparatively harmless creatures to the teacher who does not take them too seriously; upon acquaintance they may prove to be quite loyal to the teacher in his work.

**Freedom from Cross Grain.** Above all, the teacher must be free from pessimism and chronic irritability. These strike at the very foundation of



his success and his usefulness. With this disposition he cannot approach those in position to aid him, he cannot obtain a frank expression of conviction from persons, and he creates a growing spirit of opposition, which weakens all his policies. A teacher's spirit of approach and attack in school matters constitutes a large part of his success in accomplishment.

This quality in the teacher usually manifests itself in nagging, scolding, faultfinding, and misconstruction of the motives of pupils and others with whom the teacher deals. It expresses itself in criticism of associate teachers and superiors. The teacher begins his school with a tirade against the inefficiency of the former teacher; he gives the pupils an examination to see "how much they know." Later he accuses the pupils of being dumb; he threatens to send them back to the previous grade; he blames the parents for their "shortsighted indulgences." All that is needed for transforming such a teacher from a weakling, which he almost invariably is, to a teacher of superior strength, is to direct all the energy consumed in this manner into efforts for more efficient teaching. An inferior workman is almost always detected by his hostile attitude toward other members of his calling.

**Physical Efficiency.** Physical vigor is an indispensable requirement for the best work in the school-room. It determines largely the disposition of the teacher and his attitude toward his work. No teacher is so strong that he might not dissipate his energies outside of school hours to an extent that he is unfitted

for efficient work in his school. It does not matter as to the nature of the enterprise which lays claim to the teacher's vigor; the effect on his work is the same. The teacher who spends his energy in the dance hall, and the one who spends his in long hours of tense excitement in a local revival meeting, are alike unfit for the proper discharge of their duties in the school-room; each is about equally at fault. It is not insisted upon here that the teacher should never attend a dance, a revival service, or other social activity in his community on an evening preceding a school day; it may be good school policy to mingle in the affairs of one's community sometimes when the teacher's efficiency is but slightly impaired by it, but to practice this dissipation of one's energies regularly for weeks and months cannot be justified by any counter claims.

A teacher of limited energies may keep himself in condition to perform a high class of service by a careful conservation of his strength. This will require some self-denial in the participation of pleasures at times, and will necessitate a strict conformance to the best principles he knows concerning hygiene. It is possible for the teacher to exhaust his energies by overwork outside of school hours. It is impossible for a teacher to sit up until after midnight habitually and be able to do his work efficiently the following day. Much of the time consumed by the teacher in correcting papers could be easily saved if he arranged his work differently. It is unnecessary to collect each day much written work which is taken up by teachers.

To look over every problem prepared in arithmetic each day is a waste of time; the same is true of much of the work done in language. The teacher should be able to determine from his recitations the needs of his pupils to a large extent; by some supplemental work he should be able to eliminate much routine correction of papers. There is no work a teacher can do which will be an ample compensation for his lack of proper spirit in his schoolroom.

**Scholarship of the Teacher.** The teacher is presumed to know certain facts. Knowledge is his chief stock in trade; if he is lacking in knowledge, he is unfitted to teach. No person can teach all he knows; he must possess a much greater amount than he wishes to teach in order to teach a lesser amount to the best advantage. The teacher's scholarship needs accuracy rather than breadth. One must be familiar with the details of the subject of instruction rather than have much general knowledge of many subjects. A teacher may know trigonometry or calculus and yet be a failure in teaching arithmetic because of his unfamiliarity with it. He may know the general history of the world, but fail in teaching the history of his own country because his knowledge of it lacks definiteness. He may know several languages but be ungrammatical in the use of his own. The teacher who mispronounces common words in his school sows seeds of error which will take root in the lives of those under his instruction, and these errors will be transmitted to other children by those who are guided by

his tuition. Habits of incorrect usage which are formed in early childhood are eliminated slowly in later life; years after the adult discovers his mistakes, and they become a source of constant embarrassment to him. A student once entered a normal school where he took up the study of geography; he soon found that more than half of his pronunciations of geographical names were erroneous. He pronounced them as he was taught by his teacher in the elementary school; this teacher had taught in the common schools of his county for twenty-five years, and was still teaching—sowing the seeds of error. Correct knowledge requires no more effort to secure it than does incorrect knowledge, and to supplant error with accuracy is more difficult than to secure accuracy at the outset.

Accuracy of scholarship inspires confidence in the leadership of the teacher. Pupils have a high regard for those who are superior to them in knowledge, and they aspire to become like them. There is no excuse for the ignorance of the teacher in the essentials of the subjects he teaches; there are so many means of enlightenment open to the teacher of the present; information is so cheap and it is so easy to obtain quickly and in abundance, that ignorance is synonymous with carelessness. There are some things a teacher is not expected to know, but to be compelled to confess ignorance of topics closely related to the work in hand is to weaken the esteem of the teacher on the part of the pupils.

If one desires to keep familiar with certain fields of knowledge, he must explore them anew at certain intervals. A little time devoted to systematic study will keep in the mind many facts and principles which would otherwise cease to be at the teacher's command.

**Personal Habits.** The teacher should be exemplary in his habits; he should be an example worthy of imitation by those he instructs. It often happens that the youth whom he instructs have improper models to follow in their home life. Suppose a boy's father is given to the use of intoxicating liquor; suppose even that he is an inveterate user of tobacco; this boy should meet somewhere in his career those who point him in a new and better direction. There may, perhaps, be habits which are in a large measure harmless in themselves; they may be habits which a large per cent of men could practice without serious consequences, but these habits may effectively debar men from engaging in certain other callings. It is increasingly apparent to the close observer that more is being constantly demanded of every one as to his personal habits. The use of liquor, tobacco, and drugs is growing in disfavor with those who are employers of men; profanity has no place in polite company. Fifty years ago it was common for teachers to chew and smoke in the schoolroom; the minister of the gospel could use liquor without serious impairment of his standing; young women smoked the clay pipe without exciting comment. A new order is being ushered in; the day of abstinence is at hand; the demands of the

hour is the whole man, devoted to the discharge of the duties of his calling.

Many examples might be given to illustrate the growing disposition towards questionable habits. A few months ago a committee came from a Western state to a technical school in the Central states. They were seeking a suitable candidate for a vacancy then existing in their school. They were anxious that no mistake be made in making the choice, because they wished to continue the service indefinitely; the position could pay a high salary and could offer inducements equal to any likely to come from other places. The president of the school visited designated a young man who was considered the best in point of native ability there was in the school; he possessed all the requirements demanded by the committee; but, said the president, he smokes; he had been cautioned frequently by the authorities that this practice was not to his best interest. The young man failed to be convinced that the use of tobacco could be a serious hindrance to one seeking a position of the kind he desired; he believed in "personal liberty." The committee responded without a moment's hesitation, "We cannot use him; show us your next choice." The committee also believed in "personal liberty." The young man in question was duly informed of his fate at the hands of the committee; in twenty-four hours he placed himself on record as a non-smoker.

One of the most eloquent ministers in a certain district has been refused promotion year after year

because he will not agree to give up his pipe. He is exemplary in every other way but he languishes in a small town at a starvation salary because he believes in "personal liberty." He could easily command two thousand more in salary each year but for a habit which is not considered becoming in a minister—two thousand dollars a year for the "liberty" of smoking a pipe two or three times a day. The three greatest maxims of human philosophy were enunciated by Socrates, Marcus Aurelius, and Christ; they are, "Know thyself," "Control thyself," and "Deny thyself."

**Spirit and Attitude.** It behooves the teacher to cultivate a good spirit and attitude of mind. These give color to his work and render his activities pleasurable instead of disagreeable. It is easy for any worker to brood over his imaginary sacrifices until he is convinced that he is a martyr to his vocation. The teacher needs to guard against the encroachment of this conviction. Nothing unfits the teacher so quickly for his duties as this gloomy, foreboding attitude. There is no profession attended with greater charms and beauties than teaching, if the teacher has the insight into life, and if he understands the real significance of education. The field of the educator is inexhaustible; to study the child mind, to learn how to approach the various types of mind and disposition is full of interest.

The spirit and attitude of the teacher determines the character of the record he makes in the school.

The largest asset of the teacher is his past record. No teacher can afford to do less than his best at all times, for selfish reasons if for no others. A bad record, especially if it has been bad because of indifference and neglect on the part of the teacher, is almost a permanent barrier to advancement. The supreme test of a good spirit is the record of the work done the last year in a school when the teacher knows that year terminates his work in that community. Many teachers break under this test. The teacher is paid for his time and his best efforts in the school. To give anything less than his best service is to take money for which he has not given value. There are many vicissitudes in life; no teacher can say with surety that he may not at some time in the future wish to rely upon his friendships and his record of service in a community. Aside from these personal considerations, every one possessing the highest grade of qualities will never fail to do his best.

**Congeniality.** A large part of the teacher's success comes from that group of personal qualities which makes him an agreeable person to know. We seem to like some people instinctively and to dislike others. The teacher should endeavor to cultivate those personal qualities which tend to make him agreeable to those with whom he must deal. Warmth of personality, agreeableness, approachableness are invaluable qualities in the teacher. Some boards of education prefer to rely upon these as a basis for the selection of a teacher rather than upon experience, educational



preparation, and recommendations. The element of good cheer is manifested as one passes an acquaintance on the street. Humanity recoils from "cold-blooded" people, from grumblers, and from pessimists. A teacher who has these attributes may be a skillful instructor, but he will find it difficult to convince his patrons that he possesses more than the most ordinary ability.

The voice and the manner of speech of the teacher are sometimes disagreeable. He becomes misunderstood because people fail to discover that his intentions are good. We judge the spirit of people very largely by their voice qualities and their manner of speech. The effect of the voice of the teacher is very noticeable in the schoolroom. Some voices seem to stir rebellion in the pupils; other voices are so pleasing that they call out co-operation and cheerful obedience. Older people as well as children are unconsciously affected in this manner. It is said that the voice of Channing was like the mellow tones of a harp. The story is told that a man complained to him about Christ's denunciation of the Pharisees. Channing read the Scripture to which reference had been made; after listening to him read the passage, the man said, "If that is the way Christ said it, I'll withdraw my objection."

#### QUESTIONS

1. Name and discuss several factors that make the work of the teacher difficult.
2. Compare the relative importance of the teacher with the board of education, the kind of curriculum, and the equipment.

## 220 PRACTICAL PROBLEMS OF THE SCHOOL

3 Show what qualities of mind and temperament are desirable in a teacher.

4. Discuss proper and improper dress of the teacher.

5. What care is needed by the teacher in respect to his views on religion?

6. What conditions make it imperative for the teacher to read professional books and associate much with members of his profession?

7. Speak of the adaptability of the teacher. What are some of the objections to the teacher using his salary to purchase equipment for the school?

8. In what ways may the teacher be too sensitive? What should be his attitude toward criticism?

9. What is the effect of pessimism and chronic irritability on the teacher's work? How are these manifested in the school?

10. Show the relation of physical vigor to efficient work on the part of the teacher. How should the teacher endeavor to conserve his physical energies?

11. What is the importance of scholarship for the teacher? What should be the nature of it? Show that ignorance on the part of the teacher is usually synonymous with carelessness.

12. Why should the teacher be exemplary in his habits? What are the present-day tendencies and requirements as regards personal habits?

13. Discuss the spirit and attitude of the teacher. How do these affect the qualities of his work? What is the supreme test of a good spirit in the teacher?

14. Explain the importance of congeniality as a quality in the teacher. How does the teacher's voice and manner of speech affect his work?

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE TEACHER AND THE COMMUNITY

**Origin and Similarity of Problems.** The problems of the teachers are very much the same in every community. As one goes about from place to place he encounters much the same sort of pupils, patrons, and interests in one locality that he does in another. There are certain types of persons, traits of human nature, and general ambitions, well known to the teaching fraternity, that the teacher should anticipate in a new situation as much as he would expect to find a grocery, a butcher shop, a dry goods store, or a post-office in the community.

Many of the problems of the teacher originate from his own personal traits and peculiarities, and others arise from the temperament, peculiarities, and ambitions of the people among whom he labors. The chief thing for the teacher is (1) to become master of himself, to eliminate from himself those personal habits, traits, attitudes, and eccentricities characteristic of him which put him in discord with the forces of the school; and (2) to learn how to deal successfully with each of the fixed but various types of people found almost everywhere.

**Avoid Hasty Judgment.** It is never a good policy for the teacher to form his opinion of a community before entering upon his duties in it; he should give

little heed to reports of troubles and troublesome persons encountered by his predecessor. A pretty safe policy is to disbelieve half he hears, and forget two-thirds of the remaining half; what remains will be found amply sufficient for all practical purposes. Neither the friends nor the foes of a former teacher necessarily become those of his successor. The teacher who enters upon his duties with a clear slate, and who judges every one he meets on his merits as he actually finds them, will be surprised to see how much his classification of troublesome persons differs from that of his predecessor.

It is a common experience to hear from very conservative and intelligent citizens of a community that certain pupils and families are sure to cause the very worst of trouble to the teacher, only to find upon better acquaintance that the prediction was wholly false, and that these supposedly troublesome persons are, in truth, among his very best and most trustworthy friends. It is astonishing how much evil and how much antagonism there is in the best of people when the right sort of condition exists to call them into action, and it is equally astonishing how much genuine good there is in the worst when the proper appeal is made to call it out. The teacher, above all others, has the best avenue of approach to these opposite extremes because he deals with that which lies nearest the heart of every parent—his own child.

**The Former Teacher.** The teacher should be slow to express an unfavorable opinion of his predecessor;

there is seldom a teacher so inefficient that he has not at least a few strong friends and admirers. To give offense to them, even if there should exist sufficient evidence of incompetency, can never be productive of good to his successor. It is well not to encourage gossip about the frailties of a former teacher of the school. It usually happens that the first person to approach the new teacher with a complete account of injustice and incompetency of the former teacher is the first to gossip about the new teacher. The teacher should rejoice when he hears his predecessor complimented, because he may be sure that these compliments are good evidence that the same persons will not fail to value properly his efforts also.

It is impossible for the new teacher to know the conditions under which the former teacher has labored; until they are thoroughly known, it is impossible to judge accurately the character of his work. After the teacher has been in the community a year, he may know more of the conditions which have influenced the work of his predecessor.

**Influence in the Community.** The teacher should strive to be in favor with the community. He should never attempt, of course, to gain esteem in any cheap sentimental way; nor should he endeavor to reform the community or try to be leader in everything. Such a course is sure to defeat his purpose; but he should ingratiate himself with the community by his genuine interest in its life activities, and by becoming acquainted at first hand with the people. He may thus

learn their good qualities and at the same time let his own qualities be known. Most teachers have sufficient good qualities to succeed in their communities, if these qualities were known. How often an entirely erroneous opinion of a teacher prevails in a community from a mere lack of acquaintanceship. No plea is made here for contact with community interests in order that the teacher may be enabled to hold his position regardless of his merits, although there are many instances where teachers so ingratiate themselves into the confidence of their communities through their few good qualities that their boards of education even are unable to dismiss them from the service, regardless of their incompetency in the schools.

The teacher is able to serve the community best who has the confidence of the community. No teacher is given such a ready response, and no teacher gets such thorough support in every way as the teacher does who mingles in the affairs of his community. The teacher's informal discussion of school policies in casual meetings with friends and patrons often carries greater conviction than a formal discussion can at a regular board meeting.

**The Treatment of the Teacher by the Community.** The teacher's rating in the community, and the rating of the community by the teacher, depend almost entirely upon the teacher. A teacher often goes into a community, and at the close of the year pronounces it the most selfish place in the world; he says the people are indifferent, difficult of acquaintance, that

they ignore the teacher entirely, and that they make his life completely miserable. The following year another teacher takes the position under the same conditions; the second teacher is a stranger; he is no more efficient technically than the first teacher; he rooms at the same place, and belongs to the same church. At the end of the year, the second teacher is delighted with his new situation; he thinks the people of the community are exceedingly kind and approachable. What makes the difference? The first teacher closed the doors of his room each evening, Saturday, and Sunday, from the time he entered the community until the end of the year. He waited to receive formal calls and to be introduced to the community when he should have taken the initiative. He availed himself of every opportunity to leave town over Sunday to get relief from "that dead place." He speedily formed a strong dislike for the place; this attitude of mind led him to accumulate an abundance of evidence to strengthen and support this false conclusion. The second teacher soon became busy with his new interests. He always arranged his out-of-town trips when there was a lull in the affairs of his community. He soon thought in all sincerity that his new situation was a model one. He easily minimized the significance of unpleasant incidents, and became alert to seize upon and to cherish the good and the wholesome.

Teachers in rural as well as village schools will find it greatly to their interest to acquaint themselves with

the families directly interested in their schools. People in the rural communities especially are most hospitable; they form friendship with the teacher quickly, and they are very loyal to their friends. To them, there is no more attractive attribute than "common as can be," and there is nothing they abhor more than "stuck up."

**Peddling Trouble.** The teacher should refrain from peddling his troubles; many of the petty troubles that annoy the teacher would remain almost entirely unknown if he did not himself magnify and perpetuate them. There is no business entirely free from unpleasant aspects; there is no business which could continue to prosper if its managers advertised the difficulties of the firm. If a physician should go about telling the mistakes he has made from month to month, the deaths resulting from errors in diagnosis, the number of dissatisfied patients, and the number of unsuccessful treatments, he would soon so completely discredit himself that he would lose his entire practice. If the minister or the lawyer kept rehearsing their mistakes and misfortunes, they, too, would soon lose their prestige and the confidence of the people. Some of the very worst enemies some schools have are the teachers in the schools, because they never cease to peddle their troubles about the community. They publish the commonest difficulty, often giving it the dignity of a matter of the greatest magnitude by bringing it before the school board. No member of a board of education will have confidence in the ability of a teacher who constantly visits his place of business



to annoy him with petty troubles of the school. The teacher should be able to meet them himself. Members of school boards have their own troubles and do not wish to bear those for which the teacher has been employed to provide. Imagine, if you can, the disgust of a board of education which is asked, officially, by a principal of an eight-room school to pass upon the "high crime" of Johnny Smith, age ten, who is guilty of fighting, writing an improper note at school, or throwing a stone at a neighbor. Such offenses need ample attention, but not at the hands of the school board in ordinary cases. There are a host of other troubles which right themselves if they are just let alone for a few days, otherwise the teacher should meet them without asking assistance.

**Long Investigations.** The teacher often errs by instituting long investigations of trivial matters. This soon becomes the current topic of conversation at school and in the homes. Many misrepresentations arise and a larger circle of persons array themselves against the teacher. Soon the teacher finds himself in opposition to the community and unable to accomplish anything. The teacher need not act in haste, yet, he should form his conclusions quickly, and then should take definite action. If he cannot determine the truth in the matter, it is far better to drop the case than to continue investigating for weeks until the resulting evil is worse than the original offense.

A certain teacher was unable to decide whether a little girl eight years of age had told a falsehood. She

investigated the case for five days. She then called the child's mother to school to argue the case with her; of course no agreement was reached. It was then decided to wait till the father, who was a traveling man, came home. The plan was to call him to school that all the "records and evidence" in the case might be gone over completely. At this point the teacher asked the superintendent to be present at the next "hearing," but he promptly requested her to drop the whole matter at once, and in the future to refrain from magnifying small problems of school management. It is evident that the teacher in question should have decided the matter the first day without outside aid. If she was unable to determine the facts, a general talk would certainly have been ample for the offense.

**Avoid Factional Strife.** The teacher should skillfully avoid being involved in factional strife. He should guard his own actions and especially his tongue to avoid being quoted by one party to another. Often the factional differences in communities originate over the most trivial matters; petty jealousies of family prominence and success, marriages, church relations and doctrines, or similar matters furnish the basis. It is very seldom that there is any great principle involved. The teacher is the servant of all the people, and it is impossible for him to serve the educational interests of all to the best advantage if he takes sides in an unimportant controversy.

The teacher may unconsciously and unintentionally create factional differences in his community by

giving too much attention to certain families or interests in the community. To see a teacher exclusively monopolized by a certain family or small group of persons indicates a wrong attitude on the part of the teacher. This policy, if persisted in, is sure to lead to dissatisfaction with the teacher.

**Begin Where the Community Is.** It is impossible in some communities to do at the outset all one has been able to do in some other community where the teacher has been employed for several years. The teacher who has enjoyed a season of confidence in one community, who has had great liberties in purchasing supplies, arranging courses of study, adopting texts, beautifying the school, and making other improvements, is frequently disappointed when he finds none of these privileges granted him in his new situation. It is at this point that many teachers disagree with their boards and develop serious differences. It is useless, however, to quarrel with school boards over matters they are unable to endorse after a plain presentation of the facts by the teacher, regardless of the imperative needs of the school. If the teacher is not too hasty, he may soon lead his board of education to adopt his measures, which at first seemed hopeless. The teacher in all cases must begin where the community is and make gradual progress from that point.

**Attitude Toward the School.** The teacher's attitude toward the school should be businesslike. The teacher is, for the most part, his own boss; this is

particularly true of the rural teacher. This fact should not be productive of carelessness on the part of the teacher respecting the discharge of his duties. The teacher should not for this reason feel free to begin school later than the usual hour, to close earlier than is customary, in order to suit his personal convenience, shorten recesses, omit recitations, devote time to private work during school hours, and do many other things not to the best interest of the school. The teacher should conform strictly to conventional regulations as to the time of beginning and closing school. He should not vary from these regulations a minute except in extreme cases. He should give his time—every minute of it—to the service of his district. Writing personal letters in school, reading the newspapers or books, entertaining friends or conferring with agents should never occupy the teacher's time during school hours. It often happens that these irregularities become so common that those in authority hesitate to re-employ the teacher the subsequent year. School boards are more inclined to refuse the employment of a teacher than to make complaint regarding his conduct. The teacher who conducts his school every hour of the day in a manner to invite inspection by his board and patrons need have little fear concerning re-employment and satisfaction with his services.

**The Teacher's Conduct.** The eye of the public is constantly upon the teacher. For this reason his conduct at all times must be such as to meet the highest standard required of a teacher. There is a

standard of conduct which is commonly recognized as befitting a profession. Strangers who go into a community to engage in the practice of the profession are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the recognized standard. The teacher may be able to do many things in his home community without exciting unfavorable comment, which would destroy his influence if he attempted to do them in the community in which he becomes a teacher.

A certain young woman went into a community to take charge of a school. It was her first experience as a teacher. She had not yet learned that in assuming the duties of the teacher she had incidentally "fallen heir" to a certain traditional standard of conduct and decorum. She proceeded to live the free and simple life of her former days. One day a young man came along the street on a motorcycle and asked her to take a ride. Being acquainted with the young man and knowing that his character was above reproach, she accepted the invitation and rode behind him up the main street of the village. She was greatly chagrined when she was informed by one of the lady members of the board that the little episode had created no little unfavorable comment in the community, and it would not be advisable to repeat the performance.

Public opinion makes it necessary for the teacher to be very careful about forming companionship with persons whose reputation is in the least unsavory. An appearance in public with such a companion places the teacher, although she may be entirely innocent of

wrongdoing, under suspicion. The teacher may be led to form warm friendships with persons whose reputation is questioned, because it is very difficult in many instances for a stranger in a community to tell these objectionable persons. It may be they occupy positions of honor and trust in the community. Often the church does not seem to recognize the inconsistency of bestowing its blessing upon a deacon each Sunday whose presence with a young woman would jeopardize her reputation. It is evident that social standing is not a safe guide in all instances for the teacher. It is usually unsafe, generally speaking, for the teacher to form close friendship with persons who rush to monopolize her friendship as soon as she arrives in the community. There is always much unwritten history in every community. To this the teacher may add another chapter by "casting her pearls before swine."

Unusual judgment is necessary in all the love affairs of the teacher. It is certainly inadvisable for a teacher to keep company with a pupil in the school. This almost always creates a bad spirit in the schools and in the community. It is doubtful if teachers in the same school can, under ordinary circumstances, keep company for many months without developing a type of gossip which will seriously affect their usefulness in the school. If the love affair is to continue, it is better for the teachers to work in different communities or get married. Love affairs and harmonious schools seldom exist together.

**Discretion of the Teacher.** There is no public servant who needs to practice greater caution in his statements than does the teacher. His comments at school and in the community are repeated over and over. His position gives special significance to his utterances. Every teacher should form the habit very early of refraining from making any statement to any person concerning his school which he would not be willing to have repeated in every home in the community. He should never speak slightingly of the defects, frailties, or incapacities of any child in his school. He should never make comparisons of children in the school to the humiliation of any parent or his child. There is often much history connected with defective and sluggish children which would completely change the attitude of the teacher toward them were it known.

Recently a little girl twelve years of age was the trial of her teachers. She was unable to learn as other children do. She stared at the teachers with the characteristic blankness of the idiot. The teachers often said among themselves, "Do you know they"—meaning the child's parents—"think she is smart?" Her parents were of average intelligence, and they had six other children who were truly brilliant without a single exception. One day the mother of the unfortunate child came to the home of the superintendent of schools to unburden her heart. With tears in her eyes she told how her heart had ached for their poor child because she was afflicted beyond all earthly skill

to remedy. She said, "Of course we do not expect her to accomplish the work done by other children. God knows that she was the brightest of all our children; but at the age of five she took scarlet fever; since that time our hearts have been wrung with sorrow for her." It is evident that such a child will have trials enough to make her way in the world without any teacher or other person pointing out her misfortunes.

Another case in point is the following. A little girl entered school for the first time one September morning; after some weeks she failed to make proper progress, and besides there was some discrepancy about the name she gave at school. Questions failed to give sufficient information; the superintendent called at her home. A neat little one-story building was found, which was occupied by a washwoman. He found the woman pleasant and willing to relate all the circumstances pertaining to the child. He asked her if this child was hers, and she said she was not. Upon inquiry as to the name of the child's father, a name different from the one given at school was stated. "Why," asked the superintendent, "does she take your name?" "Well," said the woman, "it is this way; her father lives in Xville; he drank before this child was born; he continued to drink and starve his family and abuse them until his wife became insane; she died when this child was two years old. I took her at that time; after she came to live with me, I treated her kindly as God intends that all children should be treated; after she was with me three weeks,



the last request she made when she was laid in her little bed at night was, 'You won't take me back to Xville, will you? I couldn't sleep if I thought you would.' The same request was made in the morning not to be taken to Xville to live with her brutal father." Some months afterward, the child asked her foster mother if she would not call her by her own name and forget her father's name. "You are so good," she said, "I should just like to grow big and be a nice good woman like you." She had yielded to the child's request and allowed her to drop her real name, and why not? She pleaded with the child's father to help her buy clothes and books when the child approached school age. She said to him, "I have to work hard for my living, and I should like a little help to buy the things she needs for school." After she had made her plea, he put his hand into his pocket and gave her a nickel as the limit of his obligation and possibility toward the child.

The disturbed life she had lived had deprived her of two years of normal growth. Is it any wonder that her normal development in school was disturbed temporarily?

Judge not! That which appears to thy dim eyes a stain,  
In God's pure light may only be a scar from some well-won  
field,  
Where thou wouldst only faint and yield.

**The False Tongue.** The teacher is likely to suffer in most communities in different degrees by false

statements circulated about him and his work. The teacher should realize fully that he is a public servant, and that all public servants are subject for one reason or another to much caustic criticism; most of it is entirely without foundation; evils are grossly magnified, truth is distorted, and many false charges are made. It is doubtful if any teacher or executive officer of the schools is entirely safe from this evil. Recently the president of one of the leading universities of the West stated to his graduates on commencement day that he had formed the conclusion many years before that it would be impossible for him and his colleagues to attempt to answer much of the criticism against the university; if they should attempt to do it, they would not be able to do anything else. The largest part of the criticism, he said, was wholly false and without the slightest foundation.

When one enters upon teaching, he attempts to serve a large number of interests; many of these differ in personal motives and temperaments. For this reason misrepresentations and criticism become a logical part of the teacher's heritage. The teacher should understand that this is a part of his lot—not so bad as it appears, when he learns its real importance. The faultfinder magnifies the extent of disfavor into which the teacher is falling; he comes to the teacher with, "They are all against you; everybody is dissatisfied." But when the teacher asks for specifications he usually finds the long list of the "dissatisfied" is reduced to the faultfinder, his wife, and his mother-

in-law. No teacher can do his full duty at all times and be free from censure; the public school should stand for justice, and equality of privilege; some persons are not satisfied with this standard, but it must be maintained at the sacrifice of their good will if it is necessary. These standards are endorsed by the great majority of any community, and any teacher who upholds these standards is usually in no great danger of the critical minority who clamor for special dispensations.

The first contact with the principle of equality many children get is in the school. A little boy once lived near a teacher in the public schools; he had made her acquaintance long before he started to school; he was delighted to think he would have Miss X for his teacher. After his first day at school, he came home much disappointed; his mother was surprised that he showed such displeasure at the very start and asked him what the trouble was; said she, "You know you like Miss X so much." "Yes," said the boy, "but she treated me just like she did the other boys." It should be said of children, however, that they are usually less desirous of special favors than are their parents for them.

It is usually a bad practice for the teacher to endeavor to run down false reports about himself and his school. There is no person who is gossiped about so much as the one who is greatly annoyed by such gossip; the teacher who is independent enough to move right along without comment or commotion is spared

many annoyances that would otherwise arise. The teacher who exercises good judgment, and who becomes sure his action is just, and then acts with confidence and firmness is not often seriously disturbed by opposition.

**The Teacher's Boarding Place.** The success of the teacher is influenced very much by the character of his boarding place. It is impossible for a teacher to do his best work in a school unless he is provided with proper accommodations at his boarding place. The public have little appreciation of the necessity for daily preparation and study on the part of the teacher. If the teacher boards in a home where there are children and where his school work must be prepared in the family sitting room, it will be impossible for him to make adequate preparation for his work. The teacher can afford to pay extra for a private room for study

Some teachers need to be cautioned about repeating statements made by members of the family at their boarding place. One thoughtless teacher may spoil the opportunities in a community for other teachers. It is this almost universal fear of publicity of private affairs that makes so many families hesitate to admit the teacher into their home to room and board.

#### QUESTIONS

1. What common conditions does the teacher find in different communities? How can he best meet these conditions?

2. What should be the attitude of the teacher toward the friends and foes of his predecessor?

3. Why should the teacher be cautious in his criticism of his predecessor?

4. In what manner and for what purpose should the teacher try to ingratiate himself with the community?

5. Show how the attitude of the teacher and his practices influence his standing in the community. How do these affect the teacher's estimate of the community?

6. Why should the teacher avoid peddling his troubles? To what extent should he try to manage the school without assistance from the board of education?

7. What is the objection to long investigations of pupils' derelictions?

8. How may the teacher usually keep himself free from factional strife?

9. How may the teacher lead a backward community to better things educationally? What method is usually a failure in this respect?

10. Discuss the attitude of the teacher toward his school. Point out common ways in which teachers often subordinate the interests of their school to their personal interests.

11. Compare the standard of conduct of the teacher with that of persons in other professions. To what extent is the conduct of persons prescribed? How does this often vary in different communities and different countries?

12. Why should the teacher be careful as to the character of his companions? Why is it sometimes difficult to form correct judgments in this matter?

13. Discuss the inadvisability of a teacher keeping company with a pupil of the school.

14. Why should the teacher exercise great care in all of his statements?

15. Explain the origin of a large part of the criticism of the teacher. To what extent should it be ignored? How should it

sometimes be met? Why should the teacher refuse to mete out special favors for the sake of the good will of certain persons in the community?

16. What is the importance of a suitable boarding place for the teacher? What care must the teacher exercise at his boarding place? What care away from the boarding place with reference to it?

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITY

THE rearing and training of a child is the most complicated and uncertain of human tasks. Many elements enter into this training, but there is no element which equals in importance the influence of the parent. This has been recognized for centuries in different countries among peoples of widely different customs and ideals. In China and ancient Sparta the parent suffered punishment for the misconduct of the child; even in our own country the parent is legally liable for misdemeanors of his children. It matters very little what the other elements are which have to do with the child's training: an unfit parentage together with the constant improper home surroundings, has a strong tendency to neutralize their effects. Life is, after all, only the resultant of the forces which pull upon it. We are often vexed because some children do not respond to their apparent advantages and opportunities, yet if we knew the influences which were warping and twisting their growing characters out of harmony with our guidance, the reason would be apparent.

**Parent Responsible for the Child's Physical Nature.** The parent is responsible in a large measure for the child's physical characteristics. In a large degree these

come to the child through inheritance, but the habits of the child and the conditions under which he lives contribute much to his physical energies. A great part of the welfare of children is summarized by the terms cleanliness and purity. The child must have clean food to eat, clean air to breathe, a clean body to do the bidding of the soul, and pure thoughts to stimulate his mental and moral activities. These things are elemental, but they are as fundamental as the presence of the vital organs in the child's body. It is exceedingly difficult to impress the general public sufficiently with the importance of these matters, to induce strict application of these principles in daily practice. The State Board of Health in Illinois has prepared an exhibit which it has sent to various parts of the state in an endeavor to impress the public with the extreme importance of practicing certain elemental principles of sanitation with which every child is familiar. The main difficulty with us today is not so much a lack of knowledge of what should be done as it is to put into daily practice the things we know. Both parents and teachers are long on knowledge and short on practice. Recent studies among school children has convinced us that much of the child's dullness in school and his unsatisfactory progress are traceable to physical conditions which are largely within the control of the school and the home.

**Parent Responsible for the Child's Moral Nature.** The child's moral nature grows out of his training. The teacher has a strong suspicion that some of it is



inherited in a good deal the same way that the child inherits the color of his skin and his stature. We express this opinion by saying, "He's a chip off the old block." Some children are ruined before they are born, and some are ruined after they are born, and some have the disadvantage of the two misfortunes.

The teacher will find in his experience many cases of this character; he must accept them as mere incidents of his profession, and treat them in the most effective way possible under the circumstances surrounding him in the school and the community. There is a limit to a teacher's endurance; when a certain point is reached in the amount of energy and time expended by a teacher to train and discipline a pupil, the offender, as a mere matter of economy and justice to other pupils, should be removed from the school.

**Responsibility for Control.** The most elemental qualification for the parent is power of control. It is very amusing and frequently disgusting to see the total lack of control some parents possess. A very common experience for the teacher is to receive a request from a parent to compel from the child certain conduct that lies wholly within the jurisdiction of the parent. The child who causes the teacher trouble is usually the child who has not learned obedience at home. If it were not for the school, some children would never know the meaning of obedience to authority. Sad and unfortunate is the lot of the child who may not learn obedience at school; and this often, because of an incompetent teacher, or one who is

trying out a miracle in developing "spontaneous obedience to authority." There is no better way yet discovered for the rank and file of teachers to train a law-abiding citizen than to require obedience in the schoolroom.

Both parents should be in accord as to their methods of control; if they are unable to agree on the number of ounces in a pound, they should agree in their methods of controlling their children. It is impossible to secure obedience at home if one parent hides the misconduct of the child from the other.

**The Parent's Example.** The parent influences the child more by his example than he does in any other way. An ounce of example is worth a million tons of advice and beautiful little moral gems. Example is not something to be put on by the parent as he would an evening suit, just for the occasion; it must be a daily raiment. Mere example is a wooden thing, and it deceives no one but the one who attempts to play the trick. But a genuine life lived before the child because the parent believes in it as the best for him as well as for his children is an influence for good which overshadows all other influences. If a parent uses profanity in his home, his child is not to blame if he uses profanity outside the home; if the parent lies to gain his ends in business, he should not blame his child for lying to gain his ends against his parents—this is business, too, from the child's point of view. The child does not care what his parents preach; it is conduct that counts with him. He soon learns that

there is a wide difference between the theoretical world of conduct, and the real practical world of conduct in which he lives; he begins to make the adjustment to the practical world. The parent must have a care that these two worlds are not widely different in his own life. A child is not deceived long by pretense. We need more parents and others who have the courage to practice what they so glibly prescribe to children. We often speak of the child problem and how to solve it; but a large part of the child problem is the man problem, the woman problem, the teacher problem.

The influence of example is indicated in a homely way by the following incident. A father of two sons, aged three and five, respectively, was an inveterate user of tobacco. When the boys climbed upon his knee, he would put them down once in a while and run to the spittoon or out of doors, muttering, "I've got to spit." One day when the pastor was there, he remonstrated with the father for the example he was setting for his boys. He said, "Don't you know you are setting them an example in the excessive use of tobacco?" As the pastor said this he pointed to the opposite side of the room, where the older boy was holding the younger on his lap. "Oh, they will do all right, they are young yet; they don't notice," he said. Just then the older boy shoved the younger from his knee and ran to the door saying, "I've got to spit."

If the example set by the parent were no worse than the case mentioned, there would, perhaps, be no cause for serious alarm for the children; but it is

otherwise. The greatest misfortune some children have is that they have such pitiful specimens for their fathers, and the greatest evil following the fact is that the children are wholly unconscious of the certain road to ruin their fathers are leading them. A father came into my office a few weeks ago with his little boy, a lad of eleven years of age. He frequently boasted that he was nothing but a drunken painter, that he was not an especially bad man, but he would "drink whiskey when he had a chance." His drinking had already discredited him with all the first-class painters in the city, but he seemed to get real satisfaction out of his dissipation; his little boy, a rosy-cheeked little fellow, smiled with evident pride at each reference of his father to his desire for drink. The destiny of a boy reared by such a father is pretty certain; any boy who starts life with the view that strong drink is desirable, that it will not block his way to all honorable employment, has failed to secure the most fundamental principle for a successful career. There is a very small place in our economic life for the man who mixes drinks and business, and such men are yielding constantly more and more to sober men. It is a rule in one of the largest industries of the United States that for the first offense in the use of liquor the employee is laid off thirty days; for the second offense he is laid off sixty days, and for the third offense he is permanently discharged.

There is no question asked by employers so frequently as the question of sobriety; this is not a matter

of positive drunkenness with most employers; they demand that their employees abstain entirely from the use of liquor. If children could be convinced of the extreme importance of living a temperate life it would contribute more than many pages of books to their success and efficiency.

**Effect of Parent's Attitude.** Children are imitators; they adopt quickly the attitudes and opinions of their parents and others. The child's attitude toward truth is determined very largely by the stand his father takes in the thousands of instances that come up in the life of every family; the attitude of the parent which is expressed unconsciously and incidentally in conversation takes root in the life of the child more deeply than formal attempts of the parent in moral training. There is more moral character formed in the unguarded moments around the family table than anywhere else in the world. It is here that the conversation is free, and it is here that the real life of the parent is expressed. It is here that the boy learns his first lessons in politics and religion and his doctrines concerning wealth and a host of other matters which have to do with life. These lessons more or less unconsciously taught by the parent take a deep hold on the life of the child because they spring spontaneously from the daily experiences of the family life and because of the deep sincerity which, for this reason, attends them. If the parent shows in these informal conversations how he surreptitiously varies from truth, and schemes

to win in his affairs, very soon the child learns to do likewise.

Parents often make deep impressions when they least suspect it. This is the reason the "family skeleton" is hauled out so frequently by the child. A little girl recently held up her hand and said she could spell whiskey, because, she said, "I see that on papa's bottle every day." Her father happened to be a very prominent deacon in the church. Another child in the same room heard her teacher scolding some little boys for swearing; she begged the teacher to swear just a little. She said, "I want to know how it sounds." One does not need to know much more about the father's habits in that home. In the Sunday-school class the teacher told the children about the Egyptians, and she stated incidentally that they buried their kings in the pyramids. One little girl innocently inquired, "Where do they bury their jacks?"

**Responsibility for Attendance at School.** Regular attendance at school is fundamental; it is impossible to instruct an absent pupil. Unnecessary absence is one of the school's greatest obstacles in the instruction of some pupils. Attendance at school is largely a habit, and nonattendance is a habit easily formed. Parents sometimes labor under the impression that the way to make attendance at school agreeable to the child is by permitting occasional absence. Occasional absence has just the opposite effect: it cultivates a desire for more absence, and increases the child's dislike for school. Some of the most bitter

disappointments come to parents who practice the policy of occasional absence. A well-to-do mother began to practice this policy with her son when he reached the high school. She thought that permitting him to remain out of school a day in two weeks would make very little difference in his progress, and the vacation would keep the school tasks sufficiently tempered so that her son would stay in school until he finished the course. After the first month, the boy asked for another occasional day for vacation, which was granted; his demands continued to increase slowly until his mother began to foresee the danger point; but the desire for relief from school had taken a firm hold on the boy, and he was not to be persuaded to yield his request. The result was a shift by the mother to the policy of bribing with material rewards for attendance at school. This new inducement kept the boy in school until the end of the year. At the beginning of the next year the reward had to be increased in order to get him to enter school; his dislike for school continued to increase until he positively refused to enter school at any price.

**Entering Children Too Young.** The parent is frequently responsible for the child's presence at school before the legal age. Experience shows clearly the necessity of verifying the ages of some children before admitting them to school. Parents often fail to understand that a child who enters school under age is at a disadvantage; they do not see why the child should not enter at one age as well as another.

Some parents are anxious to enter their children early in order to be relieved of their annoyance at home. A little girl brought her younger brother to school the first day and opened the primary door and turned him in, and remarked at the same time, "I tell you ma's glad to get rid of him." When one reads in the paper the observation of the "far-seeing editor" about the parent standing in the doorway watching with streaming eyes the departure of the little one from the home to the school on the first day, one is inclined to think that the experience is quite a myth in some few instances.

**Knowledge of the Child.** Every parent should know his own child; it is usually true he is likely to overestimate his child. In most cases the child knows the parent better than the parent knows the child. The parent should know the natural ability of his child as compared with that of other children. The child easily deceives his parent with his "superior ability" claim. There is no story that will go down the average parent so readily. A mother comes to the teacher and says that evening engagements do not affect the work of her boy because he "gets his work so easily." The results at the end of the semester show the shallowness of this contention. Even then, however, the parent is likely to believe the teacher is at fault rather than the lack of application on the part of her boy.

The parent should know the habits of his child; many children go wrong because of the extreme care-



lessness of their parents as to their associates and of ignorance as to the habits they practice. Every parent should think that his own child is capable of and is likely to be doing what he knows his friends and associates do. The teacher is often amused at parents who tell them that this boy and that chew tobacco and smoke, but that their boys never do things like that; at the same time the teacher knows that the boy of the boasting parent is the worst of the lot.

The parent should know his own child in respect to his industry and trustworthiness. It frequently happens that a father has his child under his own roof daily for sixteen years, and never learns how unreliable he is until he sends him off to college and he has squandered a thousand dollars in dissipation. This simple knowledge almost every one of his teachers could have imparted without cost to the parent. It is generally true that a boy who fails to do his duty in the home school is not likely to do creditable work when sent away. There is a class of schools that thrive by deceiving parents as to the kind of work accomplished by their children. Boys and girls sent to these schools are always given high marks regardless of their merits. Some parents never discover the deception; others do after a few months.

**The Child Outside of School Hours.** The habits and practices of the child outside of school hours determine very largely his progress in school. The attitude of the child toward the regulations of the school are determined in a large measure by his asso-

ciations and practices outside of the school. It does little good for the parent to complain about the conduct of his boy when he lets him run the streets at night. When one sees a pale-faced little boy with a big pipe in his mouth loitering along the street and in questionable company, it is evident that something is wrong with his home life. A parent who has such a boy would do well to take a vacation from all his other duties, if necessary, until he has changed the current in the life of his child. There is no shorter route to worthlessness than street loitering, bad company, and the practice of evil habits. In every village there are many youths who do not seem to be under the authority of anybody. A visit to the larger cities on Saturday evenings is sufficient to convince one that hundreds of youths slip into the pool-rooms and other places of degradation or questionable resorts through lax parental supervision.

**Attempting Good Things in Poor Ways.** It is easy to attempt to do a good thing in an extremely poor way. There are some methods and promises which aggravate the very evil they are supposed to prevent. A good, well-meaning mother was very anxious that her son refrain from the use of tobacco. She said, "Now, John, if you will not smoke until you are eighteen years old, I'll buy you a nice meerschaum pipe." Of course the natural thing for that boy to do, and which he did, was to qualify during the intervening years for the pipe, concealing the act from his mother.

A father complained bitterly because his boy was arrested on Hallowe'en for the depredations he had committed. The father said he cautioned the boy about destroying property, but he did not obey him. The whole trouble came from the fact that he failed to prevent his boy from roaming the streets on the night of Hallowe'en. There is something wrong with the fiber of a parent who permits his children to go over the city and engage in the destruction of property at any time. It is a poor way to instruct a youth in the duties of citizenship. An adult who places temptation in the way of a child is more guilty than the child.

To attempt to control children by purchase is to defeat the end desired. To elicit from a child his best efforts in school by this method often leads to bitter disappointment. It is folly for the parent to promise his child money, jewelry, fine clothes, etc., if he will make a certain grade in school, or pass an examination. The thought and interest of the child is centered upon the wrong thing. The superintendent in a village school gave a special examination for advanced standing in the school. Before the examination, a little girl told him that her mother had promised her a diamond ring, a watch, and a pony if she passed the examination. The child was of average ability, and the examination required unusual ability, because all pupils who passed the examination were to be given the privilege of skipping a grade. Under the circumstances it was quite evident that the girl would probably fail, which she did. The disappointment of a child failing to pass an

examination where so much was at stake can well be imagined.

**The Wild-Oats Doctrine.** There is too large a following among parents of the "wild-oats" doctrine. There is a feeling with some that a boy who is wayward is destined to grow into a remarkably sturdy man, and if he has not these inclinations, he is destined to be a "sissy." Teachers often exhibit this conviction in their glorification of the "excellent qualities" of the unruly child. I have seen parents so misled by this view that they would advise their children "to do something" and be "like a boy." A father annoyed his son so much by these taunts until he began to "do things" in real earnest, but his conduct failed to take that lovely sturdy course his father had in mind. In the sophomore year of the high school he contracted a first-class case of backsliding, and in spite of all the argument the father could muster the boy drifted away from the school and became a bum of the commonest type. Human life is too precious a thing with which to trifle. The father, of course, blamed the school and the community for the ruin of his boy. It is seldom that a boy fails to make good that it is not the fault of "the system" or "poor teachers." One of the most contemptible of men is the man who will, through his own stupidity, lead his child astray, and then berate his teachers and the community for his downfall. No man is the stronger by having committed a wrong, but he is just a little weaker each time to resist temptation. Any weak specimen of

humanity can yield to temptation, but only a strong and sturdy man can resist it.

The public gives too great attention to men who get out of the gutter or the prison to tell within a few weeks after their "change of heart" how they have extricated themselves from the slime and filth of dissipation. Such men should place a considerable period of years between themselves and the old life and then tell how hard the effort has been to break the habits of evil. Eternity is pretty well populated with men who have made their boasts but have found that the old life has woven a net about them that they cannot escape. These men give the young the wrong impression of these dangers; where one man goes down to the lowest depths and returns to the practice of Christian ideals there are thousands who do not and who cannot; escapes are the rarest accidents. "The chains of habit are too strong to be felt until they are too strong to be broken."

**Appreciation of Education.** The parent needs a thorough appreciation of education as an asset for his children. The child is not likely to strive for an education if his parents undervalue its importance. One of the greatest misfortunes that can befall a child is to drop out of school before he has received a good common-school education. The necessity for general education increases as business expands. There is little room in the business world today for the ignorant man, and what opportunities yet exist are diminishing each year. The boy who leaves school at an early age

will find it exceedingly difficult to hold his place in the world against those who are better equipped by training. Parents often ask for permits for their children to work before they have reached the upper grades; the reason they give is that they need the child's contribution to support the family. No child should be required to yield his opportunities for an education for the sake of supporting or helping to support other members of the family; every child has his future before him; he will have in a few years members in a family of his own to support; their welfare, their happiness, and their future will depend upon him, and no claim, however valid, should deprive him of his opportunity to equip himself as fully as possible to discharge his duties as the head of a family in the future. Statistics show that a boy is paid a liberal wage—a wage greater than men receive as workers in our best industries—for every day he attends school. It is never a question of a child having as much education as his parents; it is never a question whether he has "paid for his raising." The parent and the community owe the child the best equipment for life they can provide. Communities at times view their duties in the wrong light; they consider that they have been very charitable toward their children when they have furnished them educational opportunities; the community does only its duty by its children. After all, one generation and a single community contributes very little of the aggregate of advantages enjoyed by children of the present day; these advantages are the

results of a hundred generations. Our liberties go all the way back to the early days of absolute rulers; every man who has made a sacrifice, however small, is our creditor. Children cannot pay the present generation for what they have enjoyed; they cannot pay all to whom they are indebted—most of them have been dead a thousand years—but they are obligated to give to the next generation the same advantages they have enjoyed plus whatever additional advantages they may be able to contribute; this is the way of progress.

**The Parent's First Interest.** The training of the child is the first duty of the parent. The interest of the child should be above one's club, greater than one's lodge, and greater than one's old associates. Some children receive too little consideration in the home. There is too much cut glass won by the mother at card parties, too many social obligations which crowd out the interests of the child. There is a story told of a boy who was found by a policeman on the street after the curfew; the policeman said, "Sonny, you must either go home or go to jail." "Well," said the boy, "I'll go to jail then; pa's gone to the club, ma's gone to a euchre party, Bud's out walking with his girl, and Sis is at the theater with her beau, and they left me and the dog at home." The home is the logical place for the child to be trained for many of the most important duties of life; there has never been a substitute provided which can take the place of a proper home. We may provide amusements and social

centers for children, but to the extent that these can be provided in the home, to that extent will they yield the highest return. If a boy is determined to play cards, it is better to play them at home than to play with questionable associates in some old box car or back alley. The tactful parent will have a much greater opportunity to lead him to appreciate something better than a game of cards. There is no home which should be too fine and well-kept for the play and the games of the child. Fine carpets, delicate draperies, velvety lawns, and the like are beautiful, but they are not to be compared with hearty, romping children.

#### QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the influence of the home life upon the education of the child.
2. How does the home contribute to the physical vigor of the child? In what manner does this affect the progress of the child in school?
3. In what manner does the control of the parent influence the conduct of the child in school?
4. Discuss the influence of the parent's example upon the child.
5. How does the parent influence the child's attitude toward truth, honesty, and uprightness?
6. Where does the child get his first lessons in politics and religion? How do you account for the fact that most children form very early a strong conviction with respect to politics, but have in many cases scarcely any conviction with respect to religion?
7. Explain the effect of irregular attendance at school. How does this influence the attitude of the child toward school?



To what extent do you think the parent is responsible for nonattendance?

8. Why should the teacher not admit pupils to school who are very much under age? What disadvantage is this to the child?

9. In what respects should the parent know his own child? In what ways are parents often deceived?

10. How do the habits and practices of the child outside of school affect his work?

11. How does the parent attempt good things in poor ways?

12. Why do some parents believe in the "wild-oats doctrine"? Show what evils usually follow this course?

13. How does the parent's appreciation of education and the school influence the child?

14. Show how the vital interests of the child are sometimes subordinated to the social interests of the parent.

## CHAPTER. XV

### UPPER-GRADE READING

**Divisions of Reading.** Most pupils in the public schools are taught reading as a class exercise for eight years. The problem of the teacher is different in the upper grades from that in the lower grades. One might divide the eight years into two parts, placing in one division grades one to four inclusive, and in the other division grades five to eight. In the first four years the teacher's aim is the mastery of the mechanics of reading. In the last four years the teacher strives to use this symbolism mastered in the first four years, for the enrichment of the life of the pupils. This idea is frequently expressed by teachers in the saying that, "In the first four years a child is learning to read, while in the last four years he is reading to learn." This statement is hardly even a half truth, however; from the very beginning a child learns through his reading, and one never ceases to learn to read.

It is readily seen that the teacher in the upper grades is teaching the pupil "how to read." His method of attack is not the same as that of the teacher in the lower grades. Pupils in the lower grades must be given much practice in reading to "learn to read" in the sense in which we use this expression; but in

the upper grades the aim of the teacher is always defeated by an attempt to read a great quantity. The reading here is intensive, while in the other case it is extensive.

**Purposes of Reading.** The purpose of reading is almost identical with that of writing. It is said too often that the only aim of reading is to get the thought. If one gets merely the cold meaning from a piece, he loses the best to be had from reading. One must get feeling and inspiration as well. He must experience in as full a measure as possible the emotional thrill that the author experienced, if he is to get the best from reading. It is this craving of the feeling for expression that creates the best that we read just as it is the yearning of the same feeling for expression that creates the best in music. The thought of a song could be expressed in a few words, but not its feeling, not that element in it which causes us to sit time after time and listen and be thrilled by a song we have heard over and over and whose thought is simple and familiar.

Reading is valuable as an English exercise, apart from the thought and feeling it yields. In eight years pupils should become familiar with the words of English in common use. They should become very accurate in the pronunciation of these words, and they should have accurate knowledge of their meaning. The incorrect pronunciations of words heard everywhere convinces one that the school should make a greater effort to fix correct pronunciation. A visit to

a few reading classes will reveal to a close observer the source of our present inaccuracy. The teacher permits inaccuracies in pronunciations, either because of carelessness or ignorance. The teacher who will resolve to study an upper-grade reading lesson every day before attempting to teach it, and will resolve further to pass no word whose pronunciation is in doubt until it has been settled by reference to a standard dictionary will have very few mispronounced words in the class. Pupils will go out from such a school with something of real value wholly apart from the thought or other considerations. The presence of a large foreign element in our country makes attention to this element in reading very necessary.

One should get from reading an excellent training of the speaking voice. Of course for this, as for much of the rest to be obtained from reading, oral reading is indispensable. A good voice that is able to carry pleasing inflections is a great asset. The reading recitation should train it.

**False Notions about Reading.** Many teachers of upper-grade reading do not believe in oral reading. Their thought is that reading is a silent process. Such teachers see nothing in reading but mere thought-getting. Their recitations are largely quiz exercises. They are likely to defend themselves in this by saying that one seldom reads aloud and hence needs no training in oral reading. If we should grant that this is true, we must still consider the fact that one

is trained to read silently very largely through oral reading. We have a pupil explain a problem in arithmetic very carefully in order that we may follow the order of his thought process. We have him follow a definite plan of analysis in order to train his mind in a certain manner of reasoning. We know, too, that a pupil will seldom explain a problem aloud that he works, after leaving school, but in order to know his thought processes we must have oral explanations and analyses. It is for the same reason that oral reading is vitally necessary.

It is not true that it is unimportant what we read. This is no nearer the truth than that it is unimportant what we sing. The supposition that the material used in reading is unimportant has led many teachers to abandon good reading books for periodicals, current events, newspapers, shop plans, and the like. All such material lacks that higher element for which we teach upper-grade reading, and which has caused pieces of literature to live through the centuries. Most of the material in current magazines and papers will be forgotten in a few weeks. It is certainly not worth all of the time of the reading class. There is a type of reading book now very commonly used as supplementary material that serves very poorly the great purpose of the teacher of upper-grade reading. These books while excellent for history, geography, and nature study are not the best for reading.

It is often said that expression in reading follows thought. The teacher who holds this opinion resorts

to additional questions when a pupil fails to read with expression. A little reflection should show us the fallacy of this claim. The scarcity of good oral readers is well known. Very often one sees a reader fail utterly to read even moderately well his own thought. In a great normal school in an earlier day applicants for admittance were handed a second reader with a selection designated to be read to the examiner. Very few were found who could read this simple matter creditably. One who has drilled a few senior classes in class-night plays realizes how much drill is necessary to get natural expression for so simple a sentence as, "Mr. Brown, come in and take a chair." Pupils have not learned to read, to express, and to enjoy the thought of another. This is a part of the problem of the teacher of upper-grade reading.

There are those who admit that a pupil may not express what he thoroughly understands, but who think that a pupil will always express what he feels. Such teachers attempt in their classes to stir the feelings of the pupils as a means of securing expression. As a conclusive argument for this view it is claimed that a pupil never makes a mistake in expression on the playground, because he is filled with the thought, feeling, and motive. This argument, however, is not conclusive, and it fails to take into account other elements present in the reading class.

**Why Expression Does Not Follow Thought and Feeling.** We must recognize that the thought and feeling we encounter in the reading class is not that

of the pupil. It is something that has been taken from the life of another and transferred to a printed page. The pupil must get this thought and feeling from the printed symbols. This is a very different problem from expressing one's own thought from his life experience. We have to recognize, too, that the form of expression is not the pupil's. The thought and feeling might be quite familiar to the pupil, but the symbols used are different from those that the pupil would naturally use. No two persons would tell a story in exactly the same form, hence the teacher has here a distinct problem in reading. It is to get the thought and feeling and to express them in the exact words of another. If one should take a selection found in the usual reader and examine it carefully, he would be impressed with the long involved sentences, the clauses and parenthetical expressions and the transposed order, and many other things wholly different from the pupil's customary way of seeing and expressing things. This condition creates a distinct problem for the teacher of upper-grade reading. In the study of poetry this problem becomes even greater. This accounts for the difficulty encountered by the pupil in reading poetry, but the teacher must train the pupil to read poetry naturally in spite of its unnatural order and peculiarities, wholly different from one's current speech. We must recognize distinctly that written language has its own style. This fact accounts for much of the difficulty that the teacher finds in teaching reading.

The type of feeling a pupil finds in the reading lesson may be as new to him as is the thought. People differ as much in feeling as they do in their intellect and their moral expression. Some writers have a very unusual depth of feeling. This may be quite outside the experience of the pupil. The problem of the teacher here is to lead the pupil to experience something of that depth of feeling that the author experienced, and not only to experience it, but to get the appropriate expression in reading. It is this attempt at the expression of feeling and of the experiencing of it that constitutes the essential value of reading. A teacher who succeeds in a measure in creating in the pupil that thought and feeling experienced by the author has accomplished the chief end that was to be served when the selection was produced.

Power of expression comes through practice. No pupil or class can hope to become expert in expression in a short time. It takes careful study and practice to become skilled in the art of expression. Voice flexibility and control are necessary. The teacher of upper-grade reading who attempts to get good expression will soon discover that a great many pupils who have the thought and feeling of a selection lack the voice-control and the flexibility of voice necessary to express in a natural manner the essence of the selection. This voice-control and flexibility are to be acquired. In the reading class it constitutes one of the teacher's problems.



**How to Get Expression.** First we must recognize that expression is an art to be acquired. It is to be acquired just as other things are acquired. We must start with the simple elements of it and proceed to the more complex. We do this in music, in drawing, in writing, in arithmetic, and everything else we study in school, and we must do it in expression in the reading class. This means that first of all the teacher of upper-grade reading must classify at the very beginning the selections found in the book. The selections studied at first should be among the simplest and those learned last should be the most complex found in the book. A teacher who attempts to read a selection like Mark Antony's oration over the body of Caesar could not possibly secure even fairly good results. The form of expression is so complex that pupils not accustomed to careful study of the forms of expression would of necessity read in a mechanical and meaningless fashion. Think of the volumes crowded into the seven simple words, "Revenge! About! Seek! Burn! Fire! Kill! Slay!"

A teacher who has a class weak in expression should be very careful not to attempt to read a great quantity. Practice reading a small amount. Read and re-read this until pupils acquire the ability to read a small amount well. The author of a prominent series of readers makes a statement in the preface of the upper-grade books, which it would pay every teacher of upper-grade reading to keep constantly in mind; it is this: "A pupil who has learned to read well one

selection has taken a long step toward becoming a good reader." Be sure to have the pupils learn to read some selection well, regardless of the amount of time it requires to do it. It will take a shorter time to read the next selection and less and less time will be required for succeeding selections. In the end time will be saved.

We must work consciously for the formal side of expression. This form is very mechanical, almost as mechanical as the turning of a crank, but pupils who acquire the ability to read with expression must study this formal side, and they must be led to observe some of these forms, it may be mechanically, until these forms are used unconsciously in the expression of thought. One of the things that we must give attention to is word-grouping. Pupils quite generally in upper-grade reading are weak in this respect. Study with the pupils the particular group of words that belong together. Separate these groups by distinct pauses, regardless of punctuation marks; place pencil marks between the groups if necessary and practice reading these groups until the pupils read with distinctness.

Attention must be given to the pitch of the voice. The pitch of the voice aside from what is said, conveys a certain feeling. It is impossible to get certain forms of expression without a certain pitch of voice. The teacher must recognize this and lead pupils to adjust the pitch of voice to the character of the feeling expressed. Speed or rate of reading have much to do

with expression. It is impossible to get certain forms of expression until the rate of reading has been adjusted. If pupils are reading a selection pertaining to death, sadness, sorrow, or melancholy the rate must be slow. To read rapidly in cases of the kind mentioned is to render it impossible to get the expression. The teacher must watch the inflection and emphasis if she hopes to secure a good quality of expression.

There is so much to the formal side of expression that it would pay any teacher of upper-grade reading who is interested in good expression to secure a brief but carefully written book on expression. Careful study of this book will enable the teacher to solve a great many problems that now seem very difficult.

**How to Get Thought.** The teacher must follow the same plan in thought-getting that was suggested for expression. The book must be examined carefully and the selections classified in the order of their difficulty. If one should examine the average book in upper-grade reading, he should find that selections differ very greatly in respect to the depth of thought and also the means by which the thought is to be obtained. In some selections the thought is on the surface. It is not necessary to consult outside sources or even to look up many words. "Kentucky Belle," "Annabel Lee," and "Death of the Flowers," are selections of this character. These are good selections with which to begin the year.

There are other selections whose thought and inspiration must be secured to some extent outside of

the selection. Any attempt to master such selections without going beyond them is destined to fail. The particular type of knowledge required depends upon the character of the selection. Some selections require historical knowledge. "Old Ironsides," "The Last Leaf," "Paul Revere's Ride," "Winkelried," "Julius Caesar," and "Evangeline" are selections of this character. This historical setting must be amply provided before the selection is attempted. When this has been done, a large part of the difficulty in thought-getting and expression will have been mastered. Geographical knowledge is sometimes necessary as a foundation for the reading. The map is used too sparingly in most reading classes. Often the ordinary map used for geography does not serve the purpose. In such cases the teacher should make a sketch for use in the reading class. "Horatius at the Bridge," "Lady of the Lake," "Waterloo" are types of selections that need a geographical setting. It may be that a selection such as "Waterloo" requires both historical and geographical knowledge. Scientific knowledge is sometimes necessary for the proper understanding of a selection. Examples of this need are: "The Spacious Firmament," "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." In other cases specific knowledge of the life of a person or of some particular thing prominent in the selection is needed. No one can read the little poem of the "Skylark" with any understanding until he has become informed as to the habits of this bird. Poems relating to the sea necessitate knowledge

of the sea as a proper basis for the study. In some cases it seems that the great need of the pupil for proper appreciation and understanding of the selection is more life experience. It is at this point that many authors have failed in writing for children. They forget that children have not had those mature experiences which adults have had and that they cannot respond to the feeling embodied in such selections until they have seen more of life.

**The Reading Recitation.** Too many reading recitations have no aim or purpose. No preparation has been made for them; nobody seems to be conscious that anything is really necessary. First of all the teacher must make very careful preparation for the reading recitation. Such preparation is just as indispensable as the preparation for teaching a geography or history lesson. The teacher must become very familiar with the lesson itself, and such materials must be provided as are going to be needed. These materials will often include pictures, maps, and drawings, and it may be at times an experiment of some sort.

Pupils in the reading class should be given much practice in oral reading. Mere reading or the calling of words is a worthless performance. In poetry the teacher should strive to get rid of the jingle that is so common in reading poetry. As the teacher gets word-grouping and expression and all that has been suggested above, the mechanical jingle found in the reading of poetry will disappear like magic. In the class the teacher should strive constantly for clear-

ness. A very low standard for the reading recitation is the ability of the listener, without a book, to follow. Yet scores of reading recitations do not meet this low standard. In the reading recitation it is not necessary to spend three-fourths of the time questioning the children about the thought of the selection before any reading is attempted. Questions concerning the thought should be worked into the recitation as the reading proceeds from paragraph to paragraph or from stanza to stanza.

The teacher's criticism should relate to vital things. Most of the criticism that one now sees in the reading class has reference to bodily attitudes, looking off the book, holding the book at a certain distance or angle, the miscalling of words, or reading too fast or too slow. These things are important in their way, but they are of minor importance when compared with other things essential to a good reading recitation. Many teachers fall into the error of needless defining. Pupils are asked to define expressions with which every child is familiar. Such a performance is a clear waste of time. William Hawley Smith puts this error into bold relief in the example that he gives of a teacher who asked a boy to tell the meaning of "leaning against a tree." After a moment's hesitation the boy said, "Why, it just means to lean against a tree."

The assignment for the reading class should be definite. It should be just as definite as the assignment in an arithmetic class. To say to pupils, "You may read just as far as you can," is a loose and profit-

less way to make an assignment to a reading class. Have the pupils check words to be looked up, passages for special study, words for special emphasis and passages for special reading. Make some definite requirement in each assignment. With a weak class the assignment should be made short. An attempt to read a whole poem of eight to twenty stanzas in one lesson is not likely to yield anything of profit. Often eight to sixteen lines of a poem may make a sufficient assignment; in prose often one page is sufficient. Never should the teacher attempt more than can be read well. If this standard is strictly adhered to, the time will soon come when the class will be able to read a sufficient quantity in every recitation.

**Some General Suggestions.** The teacher can well afford to let the taste for reading take care of itself. Pupils will soon learn to like reading when they have been taught how to read in the highest sense. It is not a good plan to have pupils commit poems or other matter to be recited from memory until they have learned to read these selections exceedingly well. The mere recitation of the words of a poem in that mechanical and meaningless fashion that one hears so frequently is not only a waste of time but it contributes very largely to the formation of bad habits in reading. On the other hand, when pupils have learned to read a selection with excellent expression, then the committing and reciting is a very profitable exercise.

## 274 PRACTICAL PROBLEMS OF THE SCHOOL

### QUESTIONS

1. How does the purpose of the teacher of upper-grade reading differ from that of the lower-grade reading?

2. Show that thought is not all the reader should get from a selection. Mention three other benefits the pupils should receive from reading.

3. What are the purposes of oral reading in the upper grades? Show that the kind of material the teacher uses in the class is of great importance.

4. Why is expression in reading often difficult even when the thought is clear? Give several evidences to show that expression does not necessarily follow thought.

5. Why is expression sometimes difficult when the pupil has both the thought and the feeling of the selection?

6. Give some of the steps by which expression is to be acquired. How do the selections in a reading book differ in the power of expression necessary to read them?

7. How should a teacher proceed to develop power of expression with a weak class? How will the gain in power affect the attitude of the class toward reading?

8. What is meant by word-grouping in reading? Show the relation of the pitch of the voice and speed to the emotional element in reading.

9. How may the selections in a reading book be classified on the basis of the thought?

10. What are the different kinds of knowledge needed to understand certain selections in reading?

11. Show the importance of daily preparation of the teacher for teaching a reading lesson.

12. What should be the character of the teacher's criticism in the reading class?

13. How should the teacher make the reading assignment?

14. What attention should the teacher give toward cultivating a taste for reading?



## INDEX

- Adolescence, 37
- Annoyed, being, 96
- Aptitudes, variation in, 152
- Assignment, Ch. VIII
  - getting it from the text, 112
  - importance of, 108
  - length of, 119
  - making it definite, 118
  - preparation of pupils for, 109
  - preparation of teacher for, 108
- Balance, needed in the teacher, 205
- Beautiful, but useless, 154
- Beginning, importance of, 14
- Blackboard, passing class to, 73
- Capacity, lacking in, 199
- Child, knowledge of, 250
  - of the poor, 197
  - outside of school, 251
  - unpromising, 189
- Children, entering too young, 249
- Class, developing from, 145
  - illustrations of, 148
  - management of, Ch. V
  - passing to the board, 73
  - position of teacher to, 70
  - seating of, 69
- Communication, evils of, 57
- Community, begin where it is, 229
- Conclusions, three general, 42
- Conduct of the teacher, 230
- Congeniality, 218
- Content of the mind, testing, 136
- Control, ability acquired, 34
- Co-operation, parental, 46
- Course of study, 16
  - illustrations of failure, 47
- Criticism, nature of, 178
  - wrong kinds of, 180
- Cross grain, freedom from, 210
- Details, arranging, 25
- Direction, proper, *vs.* driving, 149
- Discipline, division of the subject, 48
  - general co-operation necessary, 48
  - ignoring the question, 35
  - importance of, 33
  - mistaken notions concerning, 43
  - of the room, Ch. IV
  - point of view in, Ch. II
  - relation to interest, sanitation, skill in instruction, weather, former teacher, 44-46
- Diversity, among children, 3
- Doing, learning to do by, 143
  - profit through, 170
- Dramatization, 176
- Dreamer, 200
- Driving, proper direction *vs.*, 149
- Education, appreciation of, 255
- Efficiency, physical, of the teacher, 211
- Entertainment, evil of, 182
- Exceptions to the rule, Ch. XI
- Excuses, adolescence and other, 37
- Exercise, relaxation, 65
- Experience the basis of learning, 132
- Expression, how to get it, 267
  - why it does not follow feeling, 264
  - why it does not follow thought, 264

- Feeling, why expression does not follow it, 264  
 First day, preparation for it, 14  
 Form, does not determine content, 155  
     the conventional, 142  
 Forms and illustrations, 138  
 Freedom from cross grain, 210  
     illustrated in practice, 40  
 Fundamentals, importance of, 8  
  
 Good things attempted in poor ways, 252  
  
 Habits, personal, 215  
 Hallowe'en, dangers of, 85  
*Hiawatha*, 7  
 Holding what is taught, 156  
  
 Idleness, prevention of, 66  
 Illustrations, forms and, 138  
     free from misinterpretation, 135  
     irrelevant, 135  
     showing, 72  
 Incentives, 124  
 Individual, studying the, 153  
 Information, sources of, 15  
 Instruction, everyday problems in, Ch. IX  
     reality in, 139  
 Interest, question of, 128  
     the first, of the parent, 257  
 Investigations, long, 227  
 Irony, 106  
  
 Judgment, avoid hasty, 221  
  
 Knowledge, qualities better than, 153  
  
 Learning, experience the basis of, 132  
     to do by doing, 143  
 Light, position of pupils toward, 64  
 Liking the subject, 151  
  
 Mannerisms, 136  
 Method, 124  
     some definite needed, 125  
     wasteful, 175  
 Mind, testing the content of, 136  
 Morning, the first, 25  
  
 Parent, complaining to, 105  
     conference with, 105  
     effect of attitude on the child, 247  
     example of, 244  
     first interest of, 257  
     responsibility for attendance at school, 248  
     responsibility for control of the child, 243  
     responsibility for moral nature of the child, 242  
     responsibility for the physical nature of the child, 241  
     teacher's relation to, 105  
 Pencils, sharpening, 55  
 Permission, answering without, 73  
     no communication without, 56  
 Pictures, showing, 72  
 Plan, recitation should have a, 160  
 Play, benefits of, 87  
 Playground, management of, Ch. VI  
     supervision necessary, 82  
 Power, quantity is not, 131  
 Praise, effect of, 123  
 Preparation, of the pupils, 77  
     how affected by habits of the teacher, 77  
 Profit, through doing, 170  
 Program, 9  
 Punishment, Ch. VII  
     corporal, 97  
     detention as a means of, 99  
     illustrations of improper, 90-92  
     isolation as a means of, 101  
     low grading as, 94  
     publicity objectionable, 89  
     pupils invulnerable to, 98

- Pupil, discouraged, 190  
   incorrigible, 198  
   left-handed, 200  
   overworking the bright, 165-167  
   slow, 193  
   timid, 193  
   with nervous affliction, 196  
 Pupils, adapting the text to, 116  
   beginning, 17  
   classification of, 17  
   how much aid to give to, 112  
   make comfortable, 63  
   position of, in reciting, 71  
   preparation of, 77  
   putting back, 28  
   seating of, 51  
   sending home, 102  
   supplies for, 22  
   working all, 168  
 Purpose of the recitation, 160  
 Qualities better than knowledge, 153  
 Quantity is not power, 131  
 Reaching the individual, 3  
   special groups, 4  
 Reading, divisions of, 260  
   false notions about, 262  
   purpose of, 261  
   some general suggestions in, 273  
   upper-grade, Ch. XV  
 Reality, how it is disregarded, 140-141  
   in instruction, 139  
 Recess, keeping in at, 84  
   working at, 83  
 Recitation, conducting, Ch. X  
   in reading, 271  
   method of conducting, 78  
   purpose of, 160  
   use of text in, 162  
 Regulations, rules and, 21  
 Religion, sanity in, 206  
 Remove distracting stimuli, 74  
 Responsibility for attendance at  
   school, 248  
   of the parent, Ch. XIV  
 Results, phenomenal, 5  
 Ridicule, 106  
 Room, controlling privileges in,  
   53-54  
   leaving, 53  
   leaving without supervision, 58  
   movement of pupils in, 62  
 Rules and regulations, 21  
 Sarcasm, 106  
 School, attitude toward, 229  
   effect of condition of, 22  
   first day of, Ch. II  
   plant, 22  
 Seat, leaving without permission,  
   52  
   only one pupil to a, 55  
 Seats, proper height of, 64  
 Seeking the magical, 2  
 Sensitive, being too, 210  
 Show, govern without, 51  
 Signals, 68  
   forms of, 68  
 Spirit and attitude of the teacher,  
   217  
 Stimuli, removing distracting, 74  
 Strife, avoiding factional, 228  
 Studying the individual, 183  
 Subject, liking the, 151  
 Subjects, relative importance of,  
   129  
   similarity of treatment of, 127  
 Substance, form does not deter-  
   mine, 155  
 Substitute, influence of, 59  
 Supervision, leaving the room with-  
   out, 58  
 Supplies, passing, 7  
 Surprises, springing, 162  
 Tact, use of, 95  
 Talking the time away, 176

- Teacher, adaptability of, 208  
     and the community, Ch. XIII  
     a student of himself, 207  
     attitude of, toward the school, 229  
     avoiding factional strife, 228  
     bad practices of, 59  
     chief element of the school, 204  
     congeniality of, 218  
     discretion of, 233  
     former, 227  
     freedom of, from cross grain, 210  
     influence of, in the community, 223  
     long investigations of, 227  
     peddling trouble, 226  
     personal habits of, 215  
     physical efficiency of, 211  
     plan and preparation of, 76  
     punishing, 64  
     sanity of, in religion, 206  
     scholarship of, 213  
     spirit and attitude of, 217  
     treatment of, by the community, 224  
 Teaching, fragmentary, 163
- Temper, the pupil of quick, 195  
 Temperature, 64  
 Text, adaptation of, to pupils, 116  
     use of, in the recitation, 162  
 Theories, results the test of, 10  
 Thermometer, how to test, 64  
 Thought, why expression does not follow it, 269  
 Time, talking it away, 176  
 Tongue, the false, 235  
 Topic, presenting a new, 134
- Useless, beautiful but, 154
- Ventilation, method of, 65  
 View, a prospective, Ch. I
- Waste basket, use of, 54  
 Ways, appealing in improper, 94  
 Wild oats doctrine, 254  
 Work, concert, 147  
     preparation of, for the day, 62  
     of the teacher difficult, 203  
     of the teacher fundamental, 1
- Years, the early, 7







